Tabletop Adventures® presents

a Plain Brown Wrapper edition

Celtic Age

Roleplaying the Myths,
Heroes and Monsters of the Celts

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Heroes and Monsters of the Celts

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Many of the original covers had artwork that was suggestive (or even provocative), so as a nod to that, each book of the series is being reissued in a 'plain brown wrapper.' Text beginning at the Table of Contents and continuing through the page numbered 191 appears exactly as it was originally presented.

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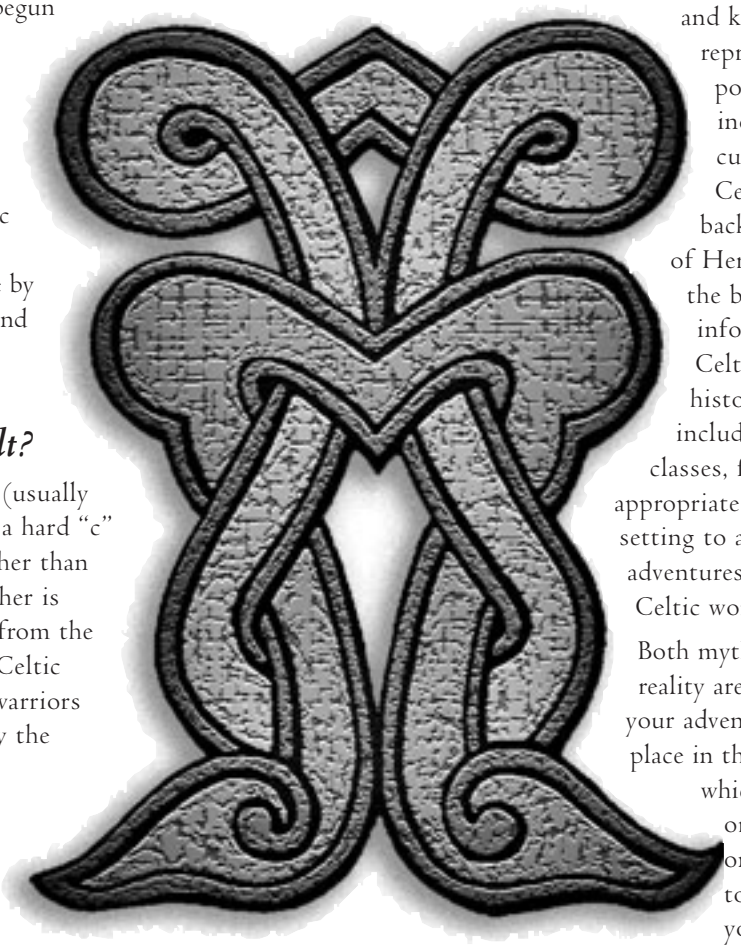
Introduction

Celtic Age is a sourcebook for the d20 System detailing the fascinating world of the Celts. It covers the century or so before and after the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Celtic civilization had just begun to reach a peak, and new Celtic states had begun to form that promised a dawning golden age. Then the Romans came. Independent Celtic tribes fell before Rome's might one by one through war and through peaceful assimilation.



Who Is A Celt?

The word "Celt" (usually pronounced with a hard "c" sound, "kelt," rather than "selt," though either is accepted) comes from the Greek "Galatai." Celtic languages called warriors "galdae," probably the origin of the Greek term.

Celtic peoples are defined as those speaking one of a related family of languages, and following certain cultural traits outlined in this book. While there are ethnic attributes, these are not unique to Celts – Germans, for example, are physically very similar but speak a different language and follow radically different ways.

Using This Product

Celtic Age is set in the period between roughly 60 BC and 60 AD, when Roman conquest smashed the Celtic tribes and kingdoms. This represents the high point of independent Celtic culture, what later Celts would look back on as their Age of Heroes. Along with the background information on Celtic culture and history, this book includes new monsters, classes, feats and skills appropriate to the Celtic setting to allow you to craft adventures in the Celtic world.

Both mythology and reality are covered here: your adventures can take place in the real world in which the Celts lived or the mythical one of which they told stories. Or you can combine them as you see fit, which would be highly appropriate. Celts believed their heroes and monsters to be real; just because they hadn't seen these wonders themselves didn't mean they did not exist.

Fantasy and Reality

The standard game guide mentions this, and it's worth repeating here: while this material is based on the real beliefs of the Celts, you are not your character. Slicing off someone's head will not increase your power. Torturing cats will not help predict the future, nor will spitting in a frog's mouth relieve toothache.

I
Celts in History

For many centuries, interest in Celtic history remained very sparse. Thinkers of both the Renaissance and the Enlightenment looked to Greece and Rome for their models of government, science, and philosophy. If they thought of the Celts at all, it was to accept Greek and Roman descriptions of them as uncouth barbarians. A few writers touched on the subject in the 1600's, but only with the awakening of Welsh, Breton, Scottish, and Irish nationalism in the 19th Century did serious study of the Celtic world begin. Even then, these thinkers usually, as the French phrase had it, "learned their Breton in Paris." They saw their Celtic heritage as a curiosity to be studied with no bearing on their daily existence.

Pre-Historic Times

Around the village of Hallstatt, just south of Salzburg in Western Austria, lie deep salt mines. It is a beautiful region on steep slopes leading down to the shore of the blue Halstätten See. The mines haven't actually produced salt for years, but visitors can tour them, where children still labored in tiny tunnels in the first half of the previous century.

One odd facet of the mines is that, unless the miners keep digging them open, the soft clay will eventually close up the shafts. So miners would constantly find evidence of older shafts sometimes hundreds or even thousands of years old. Within the tiny, cramped remnants would be tools and occasionally bodies.

In the 1870's, the director of the salt mines, Georg Ramsauer, realized that the state-owned business sat atop a vast cultural treasure. He found and meticulously marked almost a thousand grave sites, and called in Vienna's Academy of Science to begin systematic study. The findings belong to what is now called the "Hallstatt Culture," a people who date from about 700 BC. This is the first hard evidence of Celtic civilization, though it is obvious from the artifacts that they already had a substantial history by that point.

Iron had not yet come into widespread use in the Mediterranean and Middle East, yet the Hallstatt Celts worked it skillfully. A culture marked by a common family of languages and this metal-working skill grew up across Northern Europe, from the Atlantic to the Danube valley and into the Balkan Peninsula.

Contact with Greek traders helped spur Celtic cultural development. For several centuries they had been seemingly content to engage in small-scale agriculture, hunt a few animals, and raid one another to break the boredom. But contact with the Greeks brought lust for the goods the Greeks could sell them. By 500 BC even Chinese silk had found its way into the hands of Celtic chieftains.

It was not the quantity of trade that mattered, for this remained very small. Rather, the acquisition of exotic goods marked out some chieftains as elite. Status symbols helped them gain even more power. The tribes began to coalesce around ever-more-powerful leaders, leaders chosen from the now-supreme warrior class, and with greater power and organization, came the ability to wage war on a more massive scale. Soon the tribes would become power factors in the Mediterranean world.

Celtic Invasions

If one has the courage to urge his boat
Into the waves away from the Osetrymnides
Under the Northern sky where the air is freezing,
He comes to the Ligurian land,
deserted by its people
For it has been emptied by the power of the Celts
— Avienus, **Ora Maritima**

Greek traders from the colony of Massilia (the modern Marseilles) made the Classical world's first contact with the people they called Keltoi. The Massiliotes conducted most of their trade with Spain, becoming rich in the process. They traded with the inland peoples of Gaul (modern-day Southern France), but also fought with them fairly regularly. By 400 B.C. the Greeks knew of the Celts, counting them among the fierce barbarians living to the north, wild and promiscuous (the Greeks, who kept their women sequestered from everyday life, thought all other peoples sexually perverted). The Celts, learning of the rich lands to the south, saw opportunities for plunder.

The Great Invasion

When Brennus from the Western Sea
Led hosts for the overthrow of the Greeks
—Callimachus, **Hymn to Delos**

Before embarking on his conquest of Persia, Alexander the Great negotiated a peace treaty with the Celtic tribes to the north of Macedonia. The Celts respected Alexander's power, but when he died in Babylon in 323 BC, leaving only a child as heir, the infighting between his generals gave them a chance to invade and sack the rich Greek cities. For two decades the warlord Lysimachus, who had seized Macedonia itself, managed to hold them back. But when he died in battle at age 74, leaving a much weaker successor, the Celts had their chance.

In 280 BC, a Celtic army led by a chieftain named Bolgius met Ptolemy Keraunos, who had seized control of all Alexander's empire the year before by assassinating his rivals. The Celts put a quick end to the new emperor, taking his head and parading it before their army. The next year, they invaded Greece again led by a chieftain named Brennus.

The Macedonians fended off the Celts, but could not stop them from moving on into Greece. An Athenian-led force moved to stop them at the famous pass of Thermopylae, the only useful route southward toward the rich Greek cities. Barbarians the Celts may have been, but they had read their classics. They bypassed the Athenians using the same mountain path taken by the Persians when they unhinged the defense of Leonidas and his 300 Spartans in 480 BC. When the Athenian fleet tried to evacuate the army, the Celts attacked and a fierce battle broke out at the water's edge. The Greeks drove off the Celts after heavy losses on both sides. Leaving their dead behind, the invaders headed on toward their real goal, the sacred Oracle of Delphi.

For centuries, Greeks had donated treasures to the Oracle and its god, Apollo. The Celts now pillaged these riches and apparently were surprised in the course of the sack by a relieving Greek army. According to Greek writers, this enraged Apollo, who smote the thieving Celts with earthquakes and thunderbolts, slaying thousands of them.

It appears that the Celtic army may actually have fallen victim to landslides caused by an earthquake along with guerrilla strikes by small bands of Greeks. A nighttime raid also sowed great confusion, and Celtic contingents mistakenly fought one another in the darkness. The next day's fighting against the Greeks went badly, and Brennus suffered a serious wound. Despondent, he then followed the Celtic custom of enlarging the wound to make it more conspicuous, killing himself in the process. The remainder of the Celts put their own wounded to death and straggled north, losing still more warriors to Greek attacks along the way. A pitiful remnant returned to their homelands, still loaded with immense treasures.

One wing of the Celtic host founded a small pirate kingdom on the shore of the Black Sea, which endured for several generations. Another crossed into Anatolia (modern Turkey) to serve as mercenaries, eventually founding the long-lived kingdom of Galatia. Still others returned to Greece and Macedonia for decades to come, this time invited as paid swords for hire. But they would never again threaten to conquer Greece.

Vae Victus

These are not civilized people who will become your ally when you have taken their city, but wild beasts whose blood we must shed or spill our own.

— M. Popillius Laenas, Roman consul

The same population pressures that led Celtic tribes from Southeastern Europe to move into Greece provoked others to invade Italy. For traders not only brought luxury goods northward; they also alerted Celts to the existence of rich lands they could plunder.

Rome had early contact with the Celts as the kingdom expanded, and the Romans soon formed a lasting alliance with Massilia to counter this threat. Celtic settlers arrived in the Po River Valley of Northern Italy around 400 BC and soon invaded Etruscan lands. In 391 BC, Roman ambassadors tried to arrange peace between the Celts and the city of Clusium but carelessly took the part of their neighbors against the Celts when fighting broke out anyway. The Celts won the battle and demanded compensation from Rome for this breach of the peace.

Rome acknowledged the wrongdoing, but elected two of the disgraced ambassadors as the new year's consuls. Taking this for the insult the Romans surely intended, the Celts led by the chieftain, Brennus (a common leader's nickname, meaning "king"), marched on Rome. At least three tribes took part, Brennus' own Senones and their allies the Boii and Insubres. Brennus and his men smashed a Roman army at Allia and pressed on to the city itself.

Although later Roman historians recorded great acts of heroism by the ancestors of every prominent family, the Romans could not stop the Celts. The invaders burned and pillaged the Eternal City with great enthusiasm. Only a small Roman garrison held out on the Capitol hill, fending off repeated assaults. Unable to force the Celts to leave, the Romans negotiated a peace. For one thousand pounds of gold, the Celts would head back northwards and leave Rome. When Roman negotiators protested that the scales were unbalanced, Brennus tossed his sword on the scales to add to the weight. *"Vae victus,"* he snapped at them in broken Latin. "Woe to the vanquished."

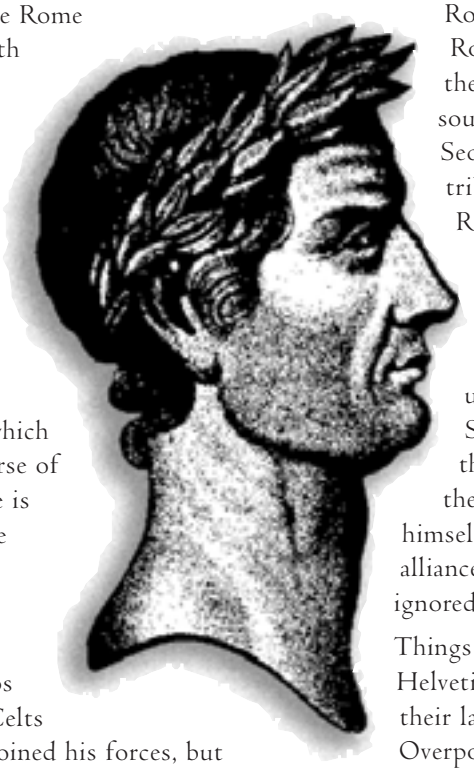
Brennus' victory did not end Celtic attacks on Roman lands, and the Romans made sure their own people never forgot the insult. *Vae victus* became a Roman watchword and the basis for Roman policy toward defeated peoples. Every new generation of the Roman upper classes grew up thirsting for vengeance against those who had sacked their invincible city. Three and a half centuries later, Julius Caesar would still cite the Celtic sack of Rome as justification for his atrocities against Gaulish civilians.

Syracuse, the powerful Greek city on the eastern coast of Sicily, saw Rome as a potential rival and funded repeated Celtic incursions for the next 50 years after Brennus' victory. In 367 BC, the consul Manlius Torquatus defeated a Celtic chieftain in single combat and took his golden torc, demoralizing the Celts and ending that particular threat to Rome. In 348 BC the tribune Valerius answered a challenge and

strode forward for the ritual exchange of insults. While he and his opponent berated one another (with neither probably understanding a word), a raven perched on Valerius' helmet. The Celts took this as an evil omen and fled the battlefield.

Almost as though they followed a calendar, about once per generation the Celts launched a mass invasion of Roman lands. Driven by new tribes coming south across the Alps, themselves moved by population increases to the north, the wars continued with neither side really able to grab an advantage. Celtic gains from these movements were balanced by Rome's increasing dominance over the Latin-speaking peoples of Central Italy.

Celtic leaders suffered a key weakness throughout their history: their near-total lack of geographic sense also blinded them to larger political realities. They continually passed up chances to attack while Rome engaged in life-or-death struggles with the Latins, Samnites, Epirotes, and Carthaginians. Then, when Rome had no such distractions, the Celts would attack alone. Had they taken advantage of any of these opportunities, which occurred over the course of about 100 years, there is little doubt that Rome would have perished.



When Hannibal, the Carthaginian led his elephants over the Alps against Rome, many Celts from Northern Italy joined his forces, but the tribes made no concerted effort to intervene in the war. Instead, they waited until Hannibal had been defeated and then attacked the Romans. This time, the tribes of Northern Italy met their final defeat and came under direct Roman rule. But conflict between Celt and Roman was far from over.

Caesar's Gallic War

> ***When Romans conquer a land, they create desolation and call it peace.***
>
> ***—Calgacus, Caledonian chief***

The most influential individual in Celtic history had no Celtic blood himself. Gaius Julius Caesar completely overturned the Celtic world in a series of military campaigns designed primarily to enrich himself and increase his political power at home. The destruction of hundreds of thousands of lives, massive property, and an entire civilization just happened to be the collateral damage from Caesar's ambitions.

58 BC: The First Battles

Population movements far to the east of Gaul started the chain of events that led to Roman conquest. The Aedui, allies of Rome, had long-standing feuds with the neighboring Arverni to the southwest of their lands and the Sequani to the northeast. German tribes had been moving toward the Rhine for some decades already, and one of them, the powerful Suebi, had formed an alliance with the Celtic Kingdom of Noricum. The Sequani, also friends of Noricum, used this connection to invite the Suebi to cross the Rhine and help them in their war with the Aedui. As the Suebi King Ariovistus had made himself a friend to Rome through his alliance with Noricum, the Romans ignored Aedui calls for intervention.

Things changed when the tribe of the Helvetii began to move eastward from their lands in what is now Switzerland. Overpopulation, and the fear of advancing Germans and Dacians, led them to seek new lands in Gaul. Their chieftain, Orgetorix, asked permission to enter Roman-ruled Gallia Narbonensis. Caesar, just named proconsul, brought his army up and defeated them badly. Unswayed in their determination to find new homes, the Helvetii looked for another route.

The Sequani, eager to create more problems for the Aedui, gave the Helvetii and their allies, the Boii, free passage through their lands and into the Aedui territory. The Aedui called on Rome to save them.

Caesar answered promptly, falling on the Helvetii as they besieged the Aedui capital. He smashed the tribe, selling tens of thousands into slavery. He allowed the Boii to return to their homelands. With the Aedui saved from one threat, he next turned to Ariovistus and ordered him to leave Gaul. The German king refused, and Caesar marched quickly to fight him as well.

The Romans fought the Suebi with unusual fury, charging them so fast that the legions did not even throw their javelins before crashing into the German shield-wall. The Germans broke under the attack, and Roman cavalry (many of them Celtic auxiliaries) rode down the survivors. Ariovistus escaped, but the Romans slaughtered both of his wives and most of his children.

Caesar had what he'd come for: a major military victory over an ancient foe of Rome. He'd even fought and won a second major battle over a different enemy, an unexpected bonus. His battlefield skills became the talk of Rome, exactly what he needed to further his political ambitions.

Caesar returned to Northern Italy for the winter, disposing of his profits and engaging in long-distance politicking; he could not re-enter Roman Italy itself without giving up his proconsulship. Using his new-found wealth, he recruited two new legions among the Roman settlers and assimilated Celts of Toga-wearing Gaul, as the Romans called northern Italy. He neither requested nor received approval from the Senate to raise these troops, a major breach of Roman law and custom.

57 BC: The Belgic Challenge

At some point during this winter, Caesar seems to have realized that he could gain even greater profit from a war of conquest in Gaul. So when the winter ended, he claimed that the Belgae had massed their tribes for an attack on his army, quartered in the lands of the Sequani. The Belgae certainly had made ready for war, minting special gold coins to finance the effort and calling in mercenaries from as far away as Britannia. One Belgic tribe, the Remi, tried to defect to the Roman side. The King of the Suessiones, Galba, led a huge Belgic army against their capital.

Caesar sped north, accompanied by his senior staff and, most importantly for his own fortunes, a whole retinue of slave dealers. He rejoined his army and led them on one of his famous forced marches to relieve the Remi. The Romans caught Galba's army in the midst of crossing a river, and inflicted a massive defeat on them. The coalition began to break up, with individual tribes withdrawing to defend their homelands from the Roman onslaught. The Romans chased down the fleeing tribes, killing ten of thousands of their warriors. Shocked by the rapid defeats, the older men and boys left at home to garrison the oppida (a Celtic form of fortified town) surrendered at the approach of the Romans, often without a fight.

One Belgic tribe, the Nervii, vowed to never surrender. Considered the most warlike of the Belgae, the Nervii had a reputation for hating Roman traders, considering them liars and cheats. Taking this vow as the insult to Rome the Nervii had surely intended, Caesar quickly marched against their capital.

But the Nervii had studied Roman ways. They knew that Roman armies always halted before nightfall to build fortified camps, and would choose ground for defense. The Nervii plotted the Roman march route, predicted where Caesar would halt, and, when his men scattered to cut down trees and dig ditches, the Nervii were waiting. They swept out of the trees in a silent charge, having put aside their war trumpets and boasting. It was a remarkable display of discipline, and it almost changed history. The Nervii got in among the Romans before they could form up to use their devastating close-order tactics and managed to turn the battle into a series of swirling group and individual duels – the sort of fighting at which the Celts excelled.

Only the personal leadership of Caesar and Titus Labienius, the X Legion's veteran commander, kept the three legions present from being slaughtered. While they held off the Nervii and tried to reform their ranks, the other three legions of the army arrived in formation and drove into the Celts. The Nervii fought furiously, even heaping up their dead to make ramparts, but they finally broke and fled, leaving behind thousands of dead. This time, though, the dead also included huge numbers of Romans.

The campaign ended with the defeat of the Aduatuci, who had marched to join the Nervii but recoiled from the dangerous ambush plan. Instead, they pretended to surrender their capital and then attacked the Romans. Caesar had his men ready, and the Aduatuci were crushed. Fifty-three thousand of them marched off to Rome in iron chains.

56 BC: War at Sea

Caesar spent the winter once again in Northern Italy defending his political position. Many in Rome now feared the power represented by his new-found wealth and private army. When spring came in 56 BC, he ordered his legions to start building a fleet of warships on the Atlantic coast. At about the same time, the tribes of Armorica rose in revolt against Rome.

During the previous year, the tribes living in what is now Brittany accepted Roman rule without resistance after the fearsome defeats suffered by the Belgae, but during the winter, they had time to reconsider and found they hated the Romans once they got to know them. Led by the Veneti, the Celtic world's greatest sailors, they now called together their warriors and prepared to attack the Romans.

The Veneti used their fleets to retreat away from oppida threatened by Caesar's land forces. The Roman fleet moved to stop them, and in a great naval battle destroyed Veneti sea-power. Using long grappling hooks to shred the rigging of the Celtic vessels, the Romans immobilized them so they could either board them or set them on fire. With their fleet eliminated, the Veneti surrendered. Caesar put all of their leaders to death and sold the entire tribe into slavery.

For his last campaign of the year, Caesar marched against the Morini, who lived on the coast of the North Sea in what is now the Southern Netherlands. The Morini, who had not sought this war, did not want to risk the same fate as their Belgic neighbors. They burned their own oppida and withdrew into the deep forests, daring the Romans to follow. Caesar tried, but his plan to simply cut down the entire forest proved impractical and he sent his troops into winter quarters with the Morini still free of Roman rule.

55 BC: To Britannia

For several years, Caesar had been planning to invade the island of Albion, north of Gaul. It would be a great feat of arms to cross the World Ocean, something no Roman had ever done. Britannia had tin, and many Roman traders wanted to control both these mines and the huge market for Roman wine that the island had become. Finally, Caesar despite his ambitions remained a Roman at heart, and Rome never tolerated a threat. The appearance of British warriors fighting alongside the Belgae proved that this island needed to be subjugated.

Before the fleet could sail, however, two German tribes, the Uipetes and the Tecteri, crossed into Northern Gaul. Caesar marched to expel them, and the German leaders proposed a three-day truce. During the truce, a skirmish broke out between German cavalry and Celtic horsemen serving Caesar's army. When the German chieftains came to meet with Caesar, he used the fight as an excuse to imprison them and then quickly marched his army to launch a surprise attack on the leaderless Germans.

Believing the Romans would honor the truce, the Germans had no guards posted, and their warriors scrambled to arm themselves even as the Romans began killing their people. Caesar ordered that no one be spared: 430,000 German men, women, and children were put to the sword. In Rome, the Senate coldly refused to grant Caesar the honors of victory, accusing him of staining the army's reputation. Something spectacular had to be done to regain the public's favor.

A German tribe on the other side of the Rhine refused to hand over the survivors who had escaped the massacre. Taking this as pretext for invasion, Caesar had his men build a bridge over the Rhine, a great feat of engineering. His army then spent 18 days burning farms and murdering German non-combatants before withdrawing back over the river and dismantling the bridge. Another feat would have to be accomplished, and soon.

While most of his army went after the Morini again, Caesar took two legions and invaded Britannia. Having spotted the approaching ships waiting for a favorable tide, the Britons donned their blue war-paint and met the Romans right on the beach. Many waded into the surf or drove their chariots into the water to attack the Romans. The outnumbered Britons could not hold for long, though, and eventually Caesar's men forced their way ashore and set up a beachhead.

A storm soon damaged their fleet, and the Romans remained in their fortified beachside camp for three weeks while they repaired their ships. The Britons pressured the camp, but used only the most primitive tactics and did not seriously threaten the Romans. Before better leaders could arrive and crush the Romans, Caesar wisely fled back to Gaul.

54 BC: Back to Britannia

> ***Avoid the unusual and extravagant word as the sailor does the rock.***
>
> **— *Caesar,* De Analogia**

Caesar could not allow the defeat to stand, and sold his withdrawal to the Roman public as merely the planned result of a reconnaissance in force. He spent the winter once again tending to his political position and writing a guide to Latin grammar, recommending a forceful and direct style. His troops spent the winter building more ships, and, when spring came, Caesar found 600 vessels ready for his use. In addition, hundreds of traders, slave dealers, adventurers and political lackeys attached themselves to his headquarters. And, to spite his political enemy Domitius Ahenobarbus, Caesar brought along an elephant as well. Ahenobarbus' grandfather rode an elephant when he conquered Gallia Narbonensis for Rome, and Caesar planned to do the same when he added Britannia to Rome's empire.

Before he could leave, Caesar learned of a planned uprising by the Treverii, Gaul's leading cavalry power. Caesar marched quickly to cow their chieftain, Idutiomarus, who handed over 200 hostages in a pledge of good behavior. With that settled, the invasion of Albion could begin in earnest.

This time, five legions made the trip, along with 2,000 Celtic cavalry. Caesar got ashore without opposition and quickly moved inland to confront the nearest tribe. But once again a storm damaged his fleet. While Caesar had spent the winter in preparation, so had the British tribes. Several of those in Southeastern Albion had placed their warriors under the command of Cassivellaunus, chief of the Catuvellauni and widely considered Britannia's best general.

Cassivellaunus ordered his men to employ guerrilla tactics against the Romans. They withdrew before major forces and tried to filter behind the Roman advance guards to fall on supply trains and isolated units of soldiers. While Caesar sought a decisive battle, the wily Celt drew him ever further away from his ships and the route back to Gaul. Caesar fought his way across the Thames with the help of his elephant, and accepted the surrender of the Trinovantes, an important tribe. But Cassivellaunus now disbanded most of his army, keeping 4,000 chariot-riders and sending many of the rest slipping back past the Romans for a surprise attack on their beachhead. Caesar and a small personal guard rushed back to the camp, but, by the time they arrived, the one legion there had smashed the uncoordinated Celtic attack.

With his plan now foiled, Cassivellaunus decided to give up. Caesar took a few hostages and went back to Gaul before winter storms made the passage impossible. While he declared the mission a great success, the Roman public was less than impressed. Already, his political hopes seemed to be fading.

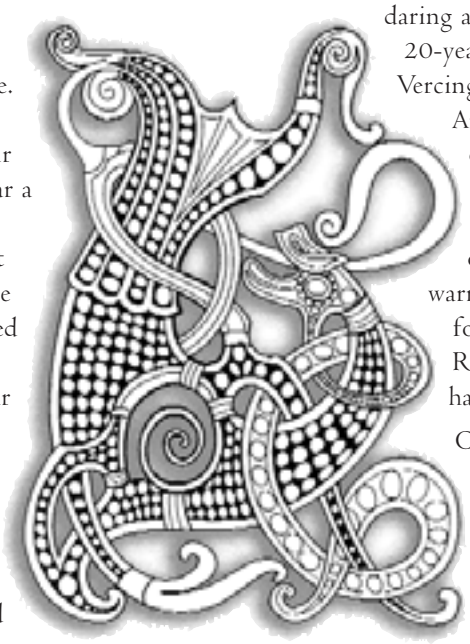
Gaul had suffered poor harvests in 54 BC, and so Caesar spread out his eight legions in separate camps for the winter. The Celts saw their opportunity, and rose in a series of coordinated attacks in the fall of the year with the Nervii in the lead. The Eburones, led by their king Ambiorix, wiped out one legion and killed half of another. When Caesar rushed to relieve one of his legions, he found the Nervii building siege works copied from Roman practice, hacking away at trees and earth with their swords since warriors would never touch a shovel. While he saved that camp, the Celts were learning and learning fast.

53 BC: Widespread Revolt

This time, Julius Caesar spent the winter among his troops, trying to repair their fading morale and madly recruiting replacements. He raised two new legions, plus a third to replace the lost unit. In addition, he convinced his

political ally Pompeus Magnus (Pompey the Great) to lend him troops from Pompey's army in Spain. But as the winter progressed, the news got worse: Pompey's wife, Julia, died in childbirth. He seems to have genuinely loved her, but theirs had been a political marriage – Caesar was her father. Soon, that alliance would start to fray.

The Celts remained busy as well, bringing more adherents to their cause. Once again, they launched a winter campaign, striking the Romans at their most vulnerable. Celts, considering war a sport, preferred to fight during summertime, but they managed to put aside these practices, and fought in the dreary rains and snow. Romans huddled around their fires learned to fear the dark nights. When spring came, Caesar responded, and, in a series of campaigns, managed to subdue the Nervii and their allies. Labienus scored a smashing victory over the Treverii, and broke their power.



As the campaign in the north dragged on, however, Celts from other regions began to see Roman vulnerabilities. The powerful, well-organized tribes of Central Gaul had been bypassed by Caesar's earlier campaigns – probably because of Roman commercial interests there, and because they seemed most apt to assimilate to Roman ways quickly and easily. They might have stayed quiet, but news from Rome showed the Republic to be at its end, and this gave new courage to Rome's Celtic enemies.

52 BC: Gaul Finds a Hero

With Julia dead, Caesar's political alliance with Pompey crumbled. The great Roman general now had to devote all of his energy to holding his proconsulship since his long list of enemies would quickly destroy him should he lose immunity from prosecution. Rome's immediate future lay in the relationship between its two greatest leaders, not in its institutions. Celtic leaders, chiefly the Briton, Commius of the Atrebates, realized this. Commius had been one of Caesar's hostages during the island campaign and now explained to his Gaulish counterparts just how much the Romans depended on their leader. Agreeing, the Celts began their campaign with an attack on the Roman grain depot at Cenabum, wiping out the garrison and executing many Roman traders for cheating Celts.

Responding to Commius and impressed by the daring assault on Cenabum, 20-year-old chieftain Vercingetorix of the Arvernii led his troop of cavalry out of Roman service and began to gather tens of thousands of warriors. He then sent a force deep into the Roman Province to harass the Romans.

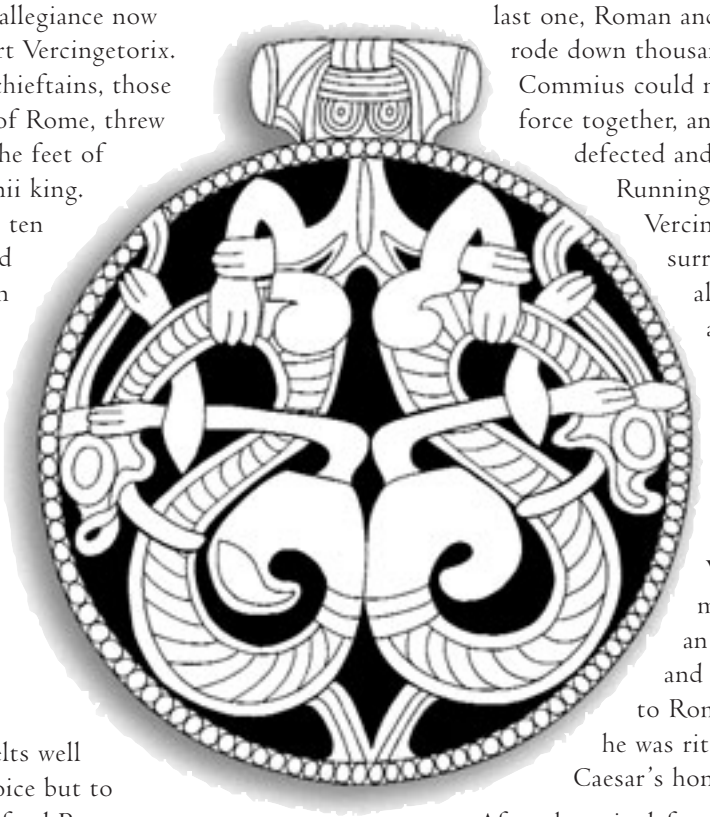
Caesar sped back and made a daring ride through Celtic-controlled territory to reach his army in Northern Gaul. Showing his usual speed and energy, he marched south to face Vercingetorix, who ordered the tribes in his path to burn their oppida and fields to deny the Romans food and shelter. In an unusual development for the Celts, though, the Bituriges had become attached to their capital, Avaricum. Most agreed it was the most beautiful of all the Gallic oppida, and the Bituriges believed its huge walls made it impregnable. Vercingetorix agreed to its defense, and brought up his army nearby to harass the Romans as they laid siege to the fortress.

Caesar's troops built a pair of huge ramps, each sporting a tall siege tower. Between them, a terrace of tree trunks held up the whole structure. When the ramps approached the wall, a daring Celtic raiding party managed to slip out of Avaricum one night and set the Roman siegeworks on fire. The defenders poured out to finish the job, and the Romans counterattacked. After fierce fighting, they pushed the Celts back into the town. The next day, helped by a driving rainstorm, they pushed

the surviving tower up to the wall and breached the defenses. When resistance finally collapsed, Caesar ordered everyone in Avaricum put to the sword.

Next, the Romans marched on the Arvernii capital, Gergovia. Vercingetorix's army harassed them the entire way. When the Romans reached the oppidum, they found a powerfully-built mountaintop fortress. However, the Arvernii had allowed their allies to build walled camps adjacent to their walls, and the Romans easily managed to penetrate these hastily-built lines. When they assaulted the walls, though, a counterattack cut off the raiders and destroyed them. A few days later, Caesar withdrew to the north.

Gergovia was the only defeat the Romans suffered under Caesar's direct command, and it had wide-ranging effects. The unbeatable Roman had been beaten. Tribes that had wavered in their allegiance now rushed to support Vercingetorix. Even the Aedui chieftains, those long-time allies of Rome, threw their swords at the feet of the young Arvernii king. Caesar united all ten of his legions and recruited German mercenaries to bolster his forces.



Vercingetorix now held the initiative – rare for the Celts in their struggles with Caesar – and attacked Roman Provence again. Caesar, as the Celts well knew, had no choice but to head south to defend Roman territory. The Gauls launched a surprise attack on Caesar's army with their cavalry, but Vercingetorix held back his foot soldiers for some reason, probably due to his youth and inexperience. What could have been a stunning victory instead led to the loss of thousands of Celtic horsemen.

Vercingetorix withdrew to the nearby oppida of Alesia, and Caesar followed. This time, the Romans constructed elaborate siegeworks to ring the Celtic town with ditches, barricades, and walls. The Celtic king sent out clouds of riders to raise all the tribes of Gaul to come to his aid, and they responded. All of Caesar's old enemies marched on Alesia, including some he had claimed to have exterminated: the Nervii, Veneti, Helvetii, Morini and more. In all, 43 tribes sent warriors. Even the Atrebates of Southern Britannia sent 4,000 warriors, and the Gauls chose the Atrebates chieftain Commius to lead the relief force.

While the Gauls assembled, Caesar's men frantically built a second line of fortifications facing outward. Three times Celtic attacks failed to breach the Roman lines, and, after the last one, Roman and German cavalry rode down thousands of Gauls. Commius could not hold the relief force together, and tribe after tribe defected and went back home. Running out of food, Vercingetorix decided to surrender. Caesar allowed the Arvernii and Aedui to return home and made the rest slaves, giving one prisoner to each Roman soldier as a reward. Vercingetorix was made to give up in an elaborate ceremony and was then sent back to Rome in chains where he was ritually strangled in Caesar's honor six years later.

After the epic defeat at Alesia, Commius and his diehard Atrebates went north to continue resistance, joining with the Bellovaci to attack the Remi, the pro-Roman tribe in Northern Gaul. Caesar marched north to relieve the Remi once again. He found the Bellovaci

camped behind a thick swamp, and had his men build portable bridges to cross the wet ground and attack the Celts. The Bellovaci chieftain, Correus, had his men gather huge quantities of brush and sticks and pile them into a massive wall in front of the Romans. When the Romans approached it, they set it on fire and ran in the opposite direction.

Correus set up a new ambush for the Romans, but a German mercenary betrayed his plans to Caesar, who sprang an ambush of his own on the Bellovaci. Correus refused to surrender, hacking down every Roman who approached with wide swings of his sword. Surrounded by Romans, he still would not give up, and so they stood back and riddled him with arrows.

Next, Caesar headed north to deal with Ambiorix of the Eburones, who still decorated his house with the heads of the Roman legates Sabinus and Cotta from his destruction of their legions two years earlier. But Ambiorix took to the woods and conducted a guerrilla campaign, killing isolated Roman soldiers but refusing to meet them in open battle. Caesar chose not to continue the effort in bad weather and sent his troops into winter quarters. After a winter spent defending his political position via letter and messenger, Caesar returned to the field and mopped up the Aquitani, who had a fortress that seemed invulnerable and had laid in huge supplies of food. However, the Romans figured out how to divert the streams that fed the springs on which they depended for water. The Aquitani surrendered, and Caesar ordered his troops to cut off the hands of all who had borne arms against the Romans.

Gaul under Roman Rule

With the Romans firmly in charge, many in Gaul collaborated with their conquerors freely and enthusiastically. Roman government brought with it the Latin language, and even those who retained other Celtic ways found themselves using it more and more for everyday use. While the peasantry kept their old tongue, more and more of the aristocrats took to Latin and the benefits of Roman patronage.

Old tribal territories became Roman civitates, or districts, with elected magistrates. Celtic nobles who held Roman offices received citizenship. The old tribal oppida became Roman towns, with all the trappings of Roman civilization: aqueducts to bring water, bath houses, amphitheaters and well-made roads and bridges. Hill-forts and oppida in inconvenient locations were abandoned, replaced by Roman planned cities.

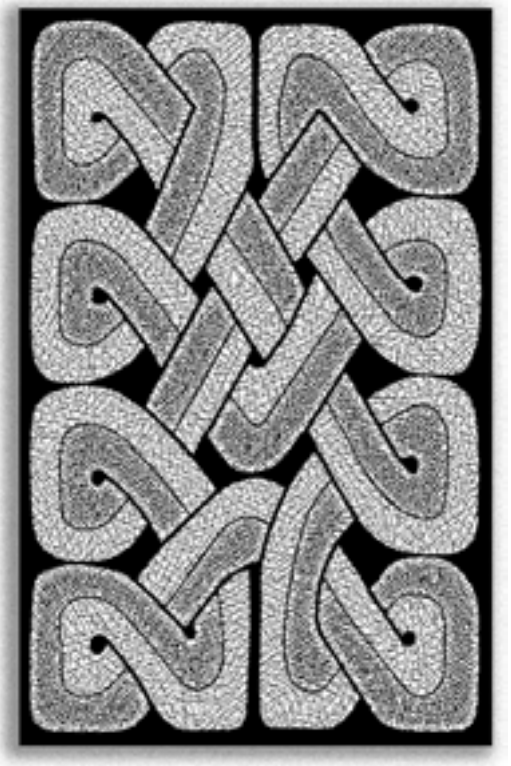
Young Celtic warriors were recruited for the legions, which would grant them citizenship on their discharge and also thoroughly indoctrinate them in Roman ways and the Latin language. Many took advantage of this, eager to spill someone's blood and get paid for it.

Roman government had many admirable qualities; this accounts for the survival of many Roman-style institutions 2,000 years later. But while Roman institutions may not have been corrupt, the men who staffed them often were. Understanding that the old Republic had used government posts in the provinces as rewards for powerful families who in turn used these offices to extract riches, the new Imperial government of Augustus and his successors often appointed natives to rule their own lands. These aristocrats became, by nature of their office, eligible for Roman citizenship. The Emperor Claudius, himself born in Gaul and fond of the Celts, extended this policy even further about 45 AD, making Gauls eligible to become Roman senators. Few actually achieved this pinnacle, but by holding out the carrot he caused the men who should have been Celtic leaders to instead strive to climb within Roman society.

In the early decades of Roman rule, however, many Celts still burned for vengeance. Caesar's war had slaughtered countless tens if not hundreds of thousands. The tribes remained quiet during Rome's wars with the Germans, despite the opportunity presented by the German leader, Hermann's, extermination of three entire legions in 9 AD. The vast destruction made it difficult to rally opposition, and acceptance of Roman rule offered many a path to comfort.

Roman corruption brought unrest, especially as the practice of tricking Celts into debt slavery continued. Revolt now burned among some of

the assimilated, who looked toward their Celtic past as a greater age. As in many times and places, the passage of years allowed educated Celts to look back on a perfect past that never was, to recall the glories and overlook the horrors. One of the striking elements of the Celtic revolts in Gaul during the 1st Century AD is the fact that most rebel leaders bore Romanized names.



In 20 AD, the Aedui, those stout allies and clients of Caesar, rose against the Romans together with the Treverii. Their leaders, the Aedui prince Sacrovir and the Treverii noble Julius Florus, tried to convince soldiers of local garrisons to join them. They brought over very few of these men, and relied mostly on a collection of escaped slaves, tribal warriors, and bankrupted farmers. Though the Aedui managed to equip their men with Roman-style armor, they could not overcome the gap in training and experience. The Aedui managed to take the provincial capital, Augustodunum but were trapped there. A Roman school there taught the sons of leading Celtic families the Latin and Greek classics, rhetoric, and the other fine points of the educated Roman. Almost all of them joined the doomed rebellion. After holding out for several weeks, Sacrovir and his men set the city on fire, and then killed themselves in a mass suicide.

The Emperor Tiberius saw Celtic education as the root of this rebellion, and banned druidic and bardic schools, overlooking that the most fanatic rebels came from the ranks of students enrolled in Roman institutes. Tiberius did not abolish the religion, just the schools, and both druids and bards continued their lessons in caves, deep forests, and other out-of-the-way locales. Claudius believed that the Celtic clerics helped spread rebellion. Augustus had begun the trend to repress Druidism by forbidding druids from gaining Roman citizenship. Claudius followed through to the logical conclusion by banning its practice. Druids, he felt, sparked rebellion by challenging Rome's authority and using their information networks to spread anti-Roman propaganda.

Claudius did not proscribe Celtic gods. These could still be worshipped at temples in the Roman manner. Roman officials hoped that, by adding alien gods to the Roman pantheon, they could encourage subject peoples to become more like the Romans. Many Celts began to worship in this manner, but, to the druids, there could be no compromise.

Another outbreak of Celtic revolt came in 68 AD. Years of misrule by the insane Emperor Nero finally exploded in unrest across the Empire. The Senator Julius Vindex, son of the one of the men raised to the Senate by Claudius, had become legate in charge of Gallia Lugdunensis, the Roman province carved out of Central Gaul. But when he rose against Roman authority, it was by calling on the tribal chieftains beholden to his family through Celtic bonds of obligation. The Aedui rose once again, along with several other tribes, and Vindex marched against the Roman army then busily suppressing one of his allies, the Sequani. The Roman general, Verginius Rufus, invited Vindex to a conference, and, like a good and gullible Celt, he went, alone and unarmed. When Roman soldiers tried to kidnap him, he stabbed himself to death and the rebellion followed him soon afterwards.

The next year, four different men ruled Rome, as armies declared their commanders Caesar (Julius' family name having come to mean ruler of Rome) and ordered a march on the capital. Aulus Vitellius, governor of Lower Germany (the Roman province including parts of Eastern Gaul), apparently did not want to be emperor, but his troops lusted for the huge cash payment they could expect on his accession and forced him to declare himself Caesar. When his army marched off to the south to fight other contenders (and eventually lose to Vespasian), the Celtic chieftain, Julius Civilis, saw this as a chance to throw off Roman domination. Humiliated by the Romans as a young man when he was charged with treason and dragged to Rome in chains, he hoped to establish a Gallic Empire despite his privileged class status.

Civilis' followers swore loyalty to this new empire, not to him personally. Tribes along the Rhine eagerly joined up and attacked the small Roman garrisons left behind by Vitellius. Julius Classicus, commander of a Celtic cavalry unit in Vitellius' army, tried to raise the legions in favor of this new empire but had little success before a Roman army defeated Civilis' main force. By the end of 70 AD, the rebellion had been stamped out and the Celtic tribes would not rise again in serious challenge to Rome's authority. Within a few generations, there would be no more Celts in Gaul, having been replaced by their thoroughly Romanized descendants.

Roman Britain

> ***The Sacred Island –***
> ***The ancient authorities call it this –***
> ***Rich in its land it lies amid the waves.***
>
> **— *Avienus,* Ora Maritima**

The end of Caesar's campaign in Britannia did not end contact between Rome and the island; it now grew much more intimate. British warriors fought in all the major uprisings against Roman rule. In the opposite direction, Roman traders continued to see Albion as a potentially thriving market, particularly in regard to the Britons' seemingly insatiable thirst for wine. Roman traders began to establish outposts on the southern fringe of the island to conduct business.

Power struggles among the British tribes led those defeated in their bids for power to flee to Roman territory for asylum. One of them, Adminius, was son of the Catuvellauni king, Cunobelinus. Adminius wanted his father's powerful kingdom to become a Roman client (thus personally enriching himself). His brothers, Caratacus and Togodumnus, knew that the Romans would take whatever they wanted and felt it imperative to keep them off the island.

Adminius managed to get the ear of the crazed Roman Emperor Gaius Caligula. Caligula prepared an invasion fleet, but his troops refused to board it – probably over pay issues. Enraged, Caligula made them march along the beach collecting sea shells, and built a lighthouse to commemorate the triumph. Two years later, assassins ended his mad reign. But the lure of Britain remained.

I, Claudius

The new Emperor, Claudius, inherited the fleet prepared for the crossing and Adminius. In 43 AD he ordered his general Aulus Plautius to take four legions plus auxiliary troops, about 40,000 men, and conquer Britannia for Rome. The Catuvellauni were expected to resist, but the Romans figured they would get at least some support from the tribes the Catuvellauni had defeated in recent years as they expanded their kingdom. Rome had not conducted a campaign of conquest in decades, and the slave traders exulted at the profits to come. Plautius also gathered the British refugees, and organized them in order to have ready-made puppet governments for conquered tribes.

Caratacus and Togodumnus learned of the preparations from their contacts in Gaul and mustered their tribe's warriors to repel the landing. In Gaul, however, the legions once again mutinied and refused to sail. Britannia, they believed, was a magical island inhabited by strange and fearsome beings. The former slave, Narcissus, Claudius' close personal friend, gave a rousing speech that somehow convinced the

soldiers to board the ships. But word of their refusal had reached the island, and the Catuvellauni had disbanded their army.

Plautius brought his army ashore in Eastern Kent in three waves, seizing the port of Richborough as his base. Though well inland today, it sat on a channel that kept it protected from the storms that had twice devastated Caesar's expeditions. Paulinius defeated the Catuvellauni in two major battles, then approached their capital and stopped for about six weeks to await Claudius' arrival. The emperor brought an elephant along for the occasion, and led the troops into Camulodonum (modern Colchester), the enemy capital. The legions then pushed forward and occupied a zone including the most commercially valuable areas.

Togodumnus was killed in defense of the capital, but Caratacus and most of the army escaped, aided by the six-week pause. They conducted a fierce guerrilla campaign but could not stop the Romans from pushing forward to a line roughly from modern Gloucester to the River Humber. All of the important market regions lay behind this line, and Claudius may have intended to make it the Roman frontier.

Behind the line, the remaining major tribes quietly made their deals with Rome - the Iceni and Atrebates becoming client kingdoms. Caratacus would not rest, though, and continued to organize resistance. The Silures of southern Wales became fanatical supporters, and Plautius sent his best general, Flavius Vespasian (the future emperor) after him. Plautius returned to Rome for an ovation (usually reserved for members of the Imperial family), but, when his wife converted to Christianity, he lost his career and, when Nero took the throne, his life.

Caratacus finally was cornered by Vespasian's Romans in 51 AD, turning to give them battle to protect the huge column of refugees, mostly women and children, which his army had acquired. Roman discipline overcame the Silures' fury, and the Celtic army broke up. The Romans fell on the camp followers, slaughtering many and seizing thousands as slaves, including Caratacus' wife and daughter.

This disaster seems to have taken the will out of the great British chieftain, who instead of falling back with the Silures went north in response to an offer of aid from the Brigantes. Their scheming warrior-queen, Cartimandua, promptly threw him into chains and gave him to the Romans. Her husband, Venutius, considered this a dishonorable act and open warfare broke out between the royal couple. Cartimandua also began sleeping with her husband's shield-bearer to deepen the insult.

Venutius defeated his wife's faction, and Romans rushed northwards to save the queen. Caratacus went to Rome in chains, where Claudius pardoned him and sent him into exile, reunited with his family. Rome now had a new province, though its hold remained shaky.

Hell Hath No Fury

On this spot we must either conquer, or die with glory. There is no alternative. Though a woman, my resolution is fixed: the men, if they please, may survive with infamy and live in bondage.

—Boudicca addressing her army
***From Tacitus,* Annals**

After Caratacus went into exile, the island remained quiet for the next decade. In 60 AD, a new governor took charge, Paulinius Suetonius. An ambitious man, Paulinius aimed to make a name for himself by subduing more of the island. Soon after taking office, he gathered his legions and headed into modern Wales to the offshore island of Anglesey. Site of the largest druidic groves in Britannia, Paulinius considered Anglesey the keystone of anti-Roman movements. From there, the druids encouraged resistance to Roman ways, and there they also trained their "wild women" female warriors.

Paulinius mounted an amphibious assault across the narrow channel separating Anglesey from Wales, and slaughtered the druids in their groves. The Wild Women fought ferociously, dying to fulfill their oaths to defend the sacred site. Exiles from Roman-ruled areas had gathered there, and these men and women died fighting or were massacred. At least some Gangani and Deceangli tribal warriors from nearby areas fought there as well, but could not stop the Romans from hacking down the ancient, sacred oak trees.

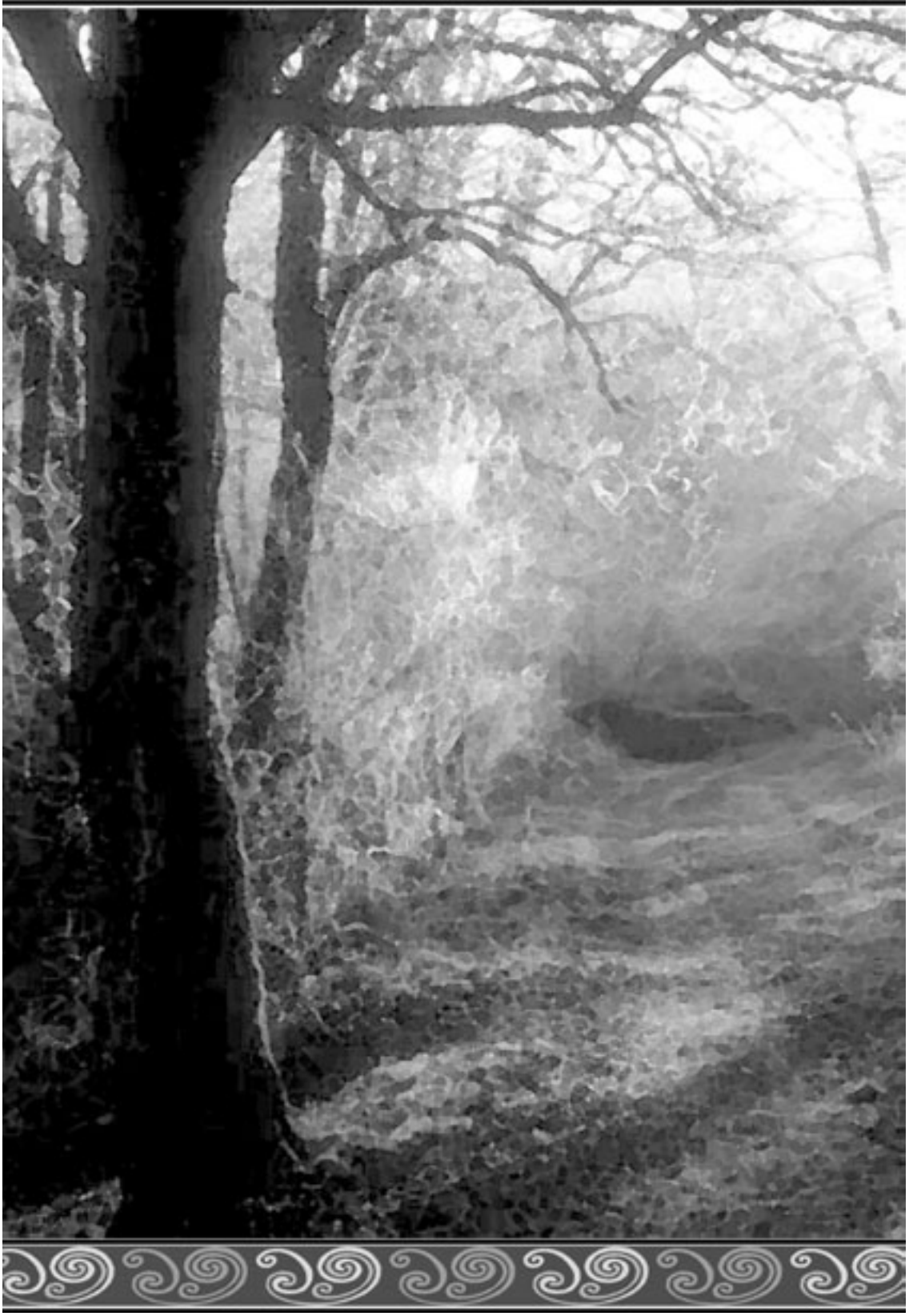
While Paulinius engaged the druids, he received word of a massive rebellion clear across the island, in what today is Kent (Eastern England). Boudicca, Queen of the Iceni, had led her people in a series of attacks on Roman colonies, burning several and slaughtering the settlers. Boudicca's husband, Prasutagus, had left his kingdom to joint custody of the Romans and his daughters. When Boudicca tried to assert authority, she and her daughters had been whipped by the Romans, and several of her relatives were sold into slavery. She called for revolt, and her people answered as did several nearby tribes.

Roman settlers and troops rallied around the Temple of Victory built by Claudius and hoped for reinforcement. However, while previous governors had spent lavish amounts on decorating the temple, they apparently had invested nothing in fortifications. The Iceni stormed it, putting all inside including Roman women and children to the sword. Petilius Cerealis, commanding the veteran IX Legion "Hispania," marched to relieve the 200 old soldiers holding the temple but arrived too late. He gave battle to Boudicca anyway, and the Iceni queen routed his legion and killed most of his troops. Paulinius' lieutenant, now without troops to face the rebels, fled to Gaul.

The timing, and the documented presence of Wild Women among several of the warrior hosts including as a personal guard to Boudicca, hints that the druids prompted the uprising in an attempt to divert Paulinius from his assault on their sanctuary. Boudicca certainly waited some time between her disgrace and calling for armed resistance. If this was the intent, it failed, for Paulinius had just accomplished his goals when word arrived of the uprising. He marched quickly back to face the Iceni.

Boudicca had assembled a large army, and Paulinius fell back before it while calling the two remaining legions in Britannia to join him. She also led thousands of charioteers, who somehow had managed to hide their vehicles from the Roman occupiers. When he had his forces gathered, he turned to face the Britons and Boudicca obliged with a mass charge. Her troops did no better with the tactic than the Gauls had a hundred years earlier, and tens of thousands of British warriors perished. Boudicca took poison as her army unraveled, and Paulinius swiftly crushed the last diehards.

A decade later, Venutius led the Brigantes in another massive revolt that only succeeded in getting tens of thousands of his people killed. Afterwards, the Roman general, Agricola, conquered most of the island, penetrating deep into modern Scotland. He also sent ships around Britannia, a feat probably accomplished by the Phoenicians centuries earlier but that confirmed for the Romans that it was an island. The Romans pulled back to a fortified line across Britannia, leaving the northern reaches to the wild Caledones.



2
The Celtic World

The region inhabited by Celtic peoples stretches from the Shetland Islands north of Britain to the Alps, covering the areas that will one day be known as Great Britain, Ireland, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Western Spain and Southern Germany. There are also Celtic outposts far to the east, in the regions to be known as the Crimea and Turkey.

There are only two Celtic kingdoms as such, and those are on the very fringe of the Celtic world, though some powerful chieftains lay claim to the title "king." Celts organize themselves by family, clan, and tribe, related by blood and marriage. Related tribes often cooperate in war and trade and are sometimes led by temporary kings and queens who have managed to gain influence over other tribes. There are several distinct nations among the Celts, however.

Celtic speech falls roughly into a core group of closely related languages, and several less-closely related tongues spoken on the periphery of the Celtic world. The Gaulish, British, and Belgic languages, as well as that of the Galatians, are mutually understandable. In each case, however, the reluctance of Celts to travel widely means there are many dialects spoken within each region.

On the fringes of the Celtic world, Irish, Celtiberian and Lepontic (the Celtic language of Northern Italy) are each separate languages, related to the Celtic tongues of the "core" but not closely enough to allow communication between speakers without translation.

Toga-Wearing Gaul

Northern Italy became home to Celtic peoples by about 400 BC, some 350 years before our setting. These peoples had close ties to the iron-working culture north of the Alps but soon became influenced by their neighbors the Etruscans, Greeks, and finally the Romans. Their hostility toward Rome remained strong for years after Brennus sacked the Romans, as Roman legions took out their fury on whatever Celts they could find. When Hannibal crossed the Alps with his lone surviving elephant, many Celts joined him against the Romans.

The Celts of this region live in cities and towns in sharp contrast to all other Celtic peoples. No one seems to know just why, but this difference has led to widely different cultural practices as well. The Cisalpine Celts (as the Romans call them) are more warlike than their Italian neighbors but far less formidable than their cousins in the rest of Europe. They fight without the utter fury of the typical Celtic warrior, using the phalanx tactics of Greek city-dwellers or less commonly the sword-and-shield ways of the Romans.

Cisalpine Celts find themselves caught between two worlds. They have adopted many Roman ways; for example, their women do not enjoy the social freedoms of their Celtic sisters and are never allowed to bear arms. Other Celts scorn the Cisalpines as soft men who fight without honor. The Romans give them no respect either, treating them as barbarians fit for nothing beyond manual labor.

Many of them now claim to be Romans, and, indeed, the entire area is on the verge of gaining Roman citizenship. Old prejudices continue, however; a full citizen with the hefty build and fair hair of a Celt will have a hard

Celtic Language

Because this is an historical setting rather than a fantasy one, there is no "common tongue" spoken by all characters. A PC speaks his or her native language and that is it. A character may speak other languages by taking the Speak Language Skill. Unlike in the standard game, a character does not get bonus languages based on his or her Intelligence Bonus. He or she may learn a new language by taking the Speak Language Skill but doesn't get them automatically for having a high Intelligence.

Certain dialects are inter-related, though, and may be understood with a successful Speak Language check. When encountering a similar dialect, the character makes a Speak Language check at a DC determined by the complexity of what is being said. Simple phrases such as a greeting are DC 7. More difficult ones are DC 10. Truly complex ideas are DC 13. The GM determines the difficulty of any given idea. The character may add his or her Intelligence Bonus to the roll. Related dialects are as follows:

Belgic
British
Galatian
Gaulish

All other languages require the character to actually have the particular language as one he or she speaks. Aside from the languages listed above, characters may take the following:

Celtiberian
German
Greek
Irish
Latin
Lepontic
Pictish

time being taken seriously in politics, business, or the military. But the Cisalpine cities are growing rapidly and becoming an important source of manufactured goods including the arms and armor that equip Roman armies.

Celtiberia

> ***We who are descended from Celts and Iberians are not embarassed at the mention of the somewhat harsh place-names of our land***
>
> ***—Martial, 4:55***

The region known to the Romans as Hispania (Spain) came under Celtic influence about 600 BC. Migrating tribes settled in the peninsula and intermingled with the local peoples. Their culture became less purely Celtic, but Celtic languages prevailed.

Greek and Carthaginian traders founded port cities on the Mediterranean coast, and, after Rome drove Carthage out of the Mediterranean islands (Sicily and Sardinia), the Carthaginians built an empire in Spain. Celtic chiefs became Carthaginian oligarchs, and, because most taxation focused on trade rather than farming, the Celtiberians had little quarrel with their overlords. When Carthage fought Rome again in 219 BC, they enrolled in Carthage's armies enthusiastically and in huge numbers.

Over the next century and a half, the Romans slowly conquered Celtiberian Spain. Spanish mines produced huge amounts of gold, silver and lead, enriching Rome and devouring huge numbers of slaves. The Celts revolted constantly, and their key city of Numantia fell only after a siege of 11 years. When the renegade Roman general, Quintus Sertorius, called for rebellion against Rome, again the Celtiberians flocked to fight. Sertorius, accompanied by his tame white fawn (a symbol of godly favor among the Celts, who hold white animals to be sacred), adopted Celtic cultural ways but taught his troops how to fight the Romans on their own terms. Only Roman treachery eventually managed to stop this charismatic and crafty leader.

Celtic resistance continues. The Gallaeci and Astures in northwestern Spain (the region later peoples will call Galacia) continue to resist the Romans, as do the Cantabri on the northern coast. In other parts of Spain, Celtiberians have begun to adopt Roman ways, taking Romanized names, eating bread and wine, repressing their women, and speaking Latin. In a few generations they will have forgotten their roots. But Celtic culture still flickers in many, and the Romans are seen as unwelcome invaders.

Rome divided Spain into two provinces and has ruled both with spectacular ineptitude. Corruption is rampant. Military governors provoke rebellions so that they might make their name with a meaningless victory over the Celtiberians, who still retain a fearsome reputation. During the Roman Civil Wars in the decades between 47 BC and 31 BC, Celtiberians fought in large numbers for the Roman Senate, seeing Caesar's actions in Gaul as proof he represented a greater danger to their culture. They also fought for Sextius Pompey against Augustus Caesar. Iberia's rugged mountains and tough people assure that no solution of mass deportations or enslavement is likely to work here. The only route to Roman domination will be cultural assimilation – if the Celtiberians won't stop fighting them, then the Romans will turn them into Romans.

There are some signs of Celtic culture remaining. Celtiberians wear torcs and their clothing resembles that of Gaul much more than that of Rome. Some wield large swords, though smaller than the Celtic norm, but others have adopted the falcata, a thrusting blade modeled on the Roman gladius but somewhat larger. Celtiberians take the heads of their enemies with great glee, prizing these trophies as much as other Celts do.

Celtiberian oppida, known as castros, are very large and fortified in the same manner as those in the rest of Celtic Europe. The Celtiberians build more densely within the walls, however, throwing up blocks of multi-story housing similar to that in a Roman city.

Galatians

Oh foolish Galatians,
Who has bewitched you
so that you should not obey the truth?
—*St. Paul,* Epistle to the Galatians, 3:1

As a people, the Galatians will be best remembered in future times for having an epistle in the Christian Bible named for them. Galatia, the heartland of Anatolia (what will one day be Turkey), is isolated from the rest of the Celtic world but has not lost its cultural character.

In 278 BC, about 40,000 Celts crossed into Asia Minor as mercenaries to fight alongside King Nicodemis of Bithynia as mercenaries in his war with the Seleucid King Antiochus of Syria. This number included families, slaves and camp followers, and so probably totaled only a couple of thousand fighting men. Three tribes made up the Celtic host: the Tolistobogii, the Techtosages and the Trocmi.

Things went well for the Celts at first, as they rolled up Seleucid outposts and defeated a few isolated detachments. Antiochus had all manner of problems – rebels captured his capital and his most

important military training center just as the Egyptians invaded from the south. After crushing the rebellion and driving the Egyptians back into their own lands, Antiochus called up twenty elephants from his reserve elephant training center at Babylon and marched against the Celts.

The Celts drew up in their usual order of battle, with 80 scythed chariots in the center with their infantry, and their cavalry on the flanks. Antiochus and his generals spread the elephants along their front. The Gauls opened the action with a charge by their cavalry and chariots. The elephants moved forward to meet them, and the horses panicked at the sight and smell. Terrified charioteers drove their vehicles into the mass of Celtic foot soldiers, mowing them down where they stood. The cavalry fled in all directions. Antiochus sent the elephants forward into the disordered Celtic formation, where they wrought havoc on the Celts, tusking and stomping warriors, grabbing others with their trunks to be stabbed by Antiochus' men riding the beasts.

When the Seleucid phalanx (Macedonian veterans settled in Syria) moved forward, the battle was already over. Few of Antiochus' other troops even drew their weapons. Antiochus therefore gave all honors to the elephants, erecting statues of them all over his kingdom.

The king of nearby Pontus invited the broken remnants of the Celtic host to settle in central Anatolia. These lands belonged to Antiochus, but the Seleucid king could not manage to dislodge them from the mountain region. From there, they raided the Greek-speaking cities on the Mediterranean coast and gained a fearsome reputation for their habit of sacrificing prisoners. So cruel did the Greeks consider them, people would commit suicide at the very approach of Galatian raiders. This greatly amused the Celts, who enjoyed marching toward Greek cities just to watch the citizens fling themselves from the walls. As the Greeks called them Galatoi (a variation on *keltoi*), their new land became known as Galatia.

Under the influence of their neighbors, the Galatians adopted a quasi-republican form of tribal government in which each of the three tribes sent representatives to an annual council to determine Galatian policy. This lasted until 88 BC, when King Mithridates IV of Pontus invited all the senators to a feast. The chiefs, blinded by Celtic traditions of hospitality, accepted, and Mithridates gleefully massacred them.

The Galatians responded by aligning themselves with Rome and adopting a royal government modeled on Bithynia and Pontus. In the period of our campaign setting, Galatia is officially an ally of Rome and Galatians regularly march alongside the Romans in regional wars. This has not dampened Galatian enthusiasm for the anti-Roman struggle in Gaul, however. Blood remains thicker than political alliance.

Over time the Galatians have shed many Celtic traditions. Most follow one of the religions of the Mediterranean world; worship of the

ancient Hittite Great Mother goddess is very popular. Many follow the Celtic gods as well, having simply added another deity to their pantheon. Druids are present in Galatia and have an important sacred center at Drunemeton, but they are rarer than in the rest of the Celtic world. None of the tribes maintain bardic schools, however; one has even gone so far as to set up a school for Greek-style rhetoric instead.

Galatians dress much like Greeks, though they are noted for their odd "Phrygian caps," which look something like a lumpy nightcap. They fight in the Celtic manner with Celtic weapons. They cultivate a number of unusual crops, and recently introduced the Western world to the fruit that will be known as the cherry. Like their cousins, they build hill-forts and live in powerfully fortified oppida. Here the fortified towns usually have Greek-style stone walls and often stone buildings within – having conquered a land that included cities, the Galatians destroyed these structures and used the stone to build new, Celtic-style ones.

The Galatians have maintained their Celtic tongue, and it is readily understandable by Celts from Western Europe. The Romans believe the languages to be identical. Some ties between Galatia and Europe remain: arranged marriages between leading Galatians and Western Celts are common, especially those from Gaul. These family ties also lead to fostering arrangements, with children sent across Europe to be raised. While Galatia as a whole has not intervened on either side in Caesar's war in Gaul (distances alone prohibit any large-scale involvement), individual warriors bound by family or foster ties to tribes in Gaul have set forth on the long journey to fight alongside their cousins.

Greeks still hate and fear the Galatians, accusing them of cannibalism, necrophilia, and worse. Cultural assimilation therefore moves only slowly; the Galatians are warmer to Roman ways than they are to those of their Greek neighbors. And more than two centuries later, Galatians still hate elephants.

The Province

Northwest of Italy, the Romans have annexed the one-time Celtic regions along the Mediterranean coast. This region is known as "Gallia Narbonensis" or the "Provincia Romana," and will someday be called simply "Provence."

The large Greek colony of Massilia remains the area's economic center, though it retains its political independence. Greek crops have become common here, and the region produces large amounts of olive oil and wine. The oppida here have given way to Greek-style towns, and most of them have stone or brick walls in place of the wooden or earth defenses of genuine Celtic fortifications. There remain a handful of truly Celtic oppida: Vienna, capital of the Allobroges, and Tolosa, center of the Volcae tribe, being the most important.

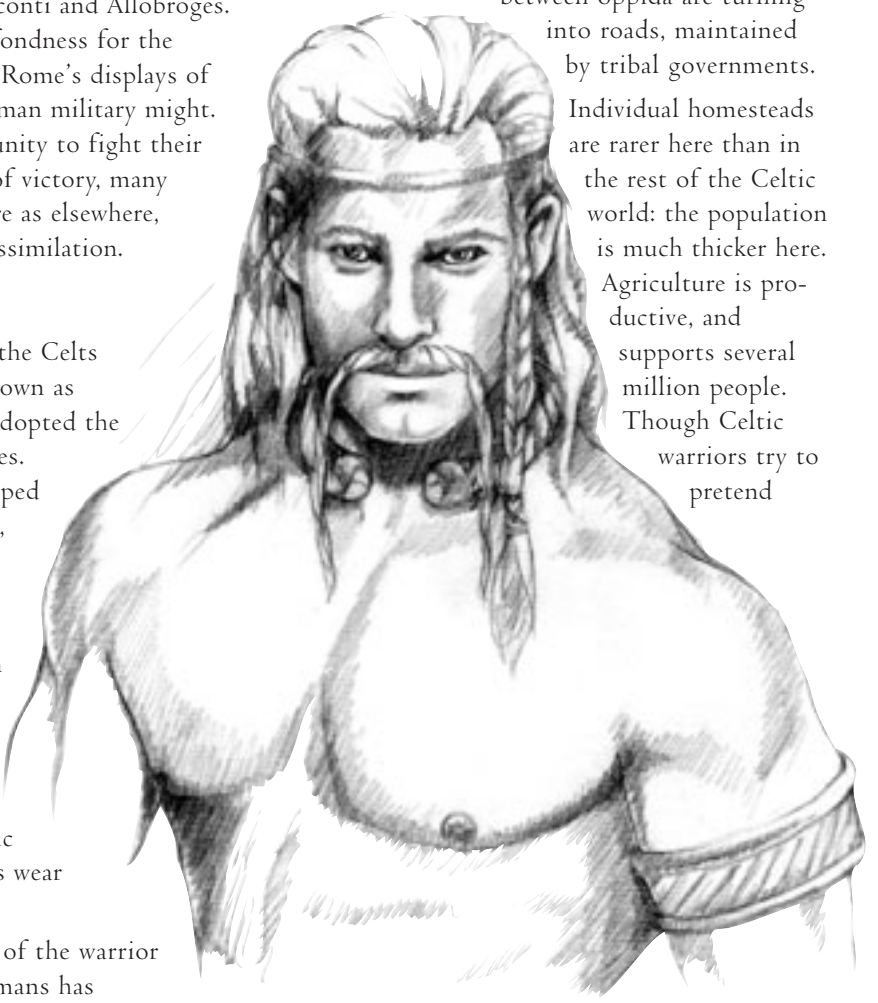
These Celtic subjects of Rome are subject to rank exploitation, and many are unhappy with their foreign rulers. A common Roman scam undertaken by corrupt officials is to force loans on Celtic chieftains, insisting that they accept money they neither want nor need. Inevitably, the money is soon spent on potlatches and feasts. Then the loans are collected by force, and, when the chieftains can't pay the debts, the

payments are exacted in form of slaves.

The most important tribes in the Province are the Tectosages, Volcae, Voconti and Allobroges. None of them have great fondness for the Romans, but all have seen Rome's displays of power and are awed by Roman military might. But if they saw an opportunity to fight their oppressors with a chance of victory, many would answer the call. Here as elsewhere, Roman prejudice retards assimilation.

Long-Haired Gaul

So-called by the Romans, the Celts of what will one day be known as France and Belgium have adopted the Latin name Gaul themselves. Though the culture developed slightly to the east of here, this has become the Celtic heartland. Celts near the Mediterranean coast have adopted Greek and Roman ways of dress and grooming; they crop their hair short. North of the coast, about 100 miles inland, begin the real Celtic lands: lands where warriors wear their hair long.



Despite the flowing locks of the warrior elite, contact with the Romans has brought great changes to the Gallic Celts. Most obvious is the military threat as Julius Caesar's Roman army advances in a war of conquest. Caesar has no legal authority to pursue his campaign, but that does not make the Roman legions any less dangerous to the Gallic way of life. Tribes have been forced to unite against this threat and to choose more permanent leaders with wider-ranging authority. If Celtic arms can buy enough time for this change to take hold, an actual Celtic state with a strong king is likely to emerge.

The most important tribes have begun to elect judges and senior advisors to their kings, using electoral methods they've copied from the Roman Republic. Their oppida are looking more and more like the cities of the Mediterranean world: with markets, government offices, mints, collective food stores, craft shops and markets. Cart tracks between oppida are turning into roads, maintained by tribal governments.

Individual homesteads are rarer here than in the rest of the Celtic world: the population is much thicker here. Agriculture is productive, and supports several million people. Though Celtic warriors try to pretend otherwise, the people of Gaul have not lived among the wilderness for several generations. Westernmost Gaul, known as Armorica, retains the old Celtic character. The land is not as productive, and can't support as many people.

Among the most important such states are the Bituriges, with the capital at Avaricum, the Aedui, centered on Bibracte, the Arverni, living around the impressive fortress of Gergovia, and the Sequani with their capital at Vesontio. They do not have formal territorial borders; the state governs a tribal people, not a set territory. If the tribe decides to move, so does its area of authority. Less developed states are being formed by the Pictones on the Atlantic coast,

the Lemovices inland of them, and the Lingones in northeastern Gaul.

While the Celts of Long-Haired Gaul still hold certain groves of trees to be sacred, their religion is transforming as well. Temples are being erected to Celtic gods, imitating the Roman temples to their divinities but retaining the distinctively non-decorative architecture of the Celts. These are unique in the Celtic world; elsewhere, Celtic gods are not thought to require buildings erected in their honor but to prefer to be worshipped among nature.

Noricum

The valley of the Salzach may be the birthplace of Celtic Culture and has also given humankind some of its greatest thinkers: composers, writers, game designers. It is also the birthplace of the most politically developed Celtic state, the Kingdom of Noricum. Founded in about 170 BC by its first king, Cincibilus of the tribe known as the Norii, Noricum's wealth and location make it vulnerable to its neighbors.

Noricum's first test came about 130 BC, when gold was discovered in the lands of the Taurisci, a client tribe of the Norii. Not only Celts, but Italians, Romans, Germans, and Dacians swarmed into Noric territory in search of riches. To maintain their identity, and control of their own destiny, the Norii had to develop a stronger system of government. They also quickly decided that, since gold was discovered on their lands, they were going to extract a slice from any strikes. Using Roman models, they set up a system of bureaucrats and tax collectors to make sure they got their share.

Militarily, Noricum is under pressure from two directions. To the east, the Dacians are threatening the small kingdom. They have overrun the Hungarian plain and are probing the Alpine highlands. To the north are the Germans, whose growing population has their tribes seeking new lands to the south and west. These attacks have displaced neighboring Celtic tribes, which in turn are trying to move into Noricum. Most aggressive of these are the Boii, who once lived on the Hungarian Plain and were driven out by the growing power of the Dacian king, Burebista. They invaded Noricum in 60 BC, and besieged the capital of Noreia, a lowland oppidum (possibly the modern Magdalensburg). Allied to the Boii are the Helvetii, who inhabit the mountains west of Noricum.

These pressures have made the Norii abandon the traditional semi-chaotic ways of tribal politics for a more stable government. Only a king with a clear line of succession, they feel, can rally the people to defend their lands effectively. The Norii live in hillforts and powerful oppida, just like the other Celts. The difference is that the King of Noricum is succeeded by his eldest son, not the most powerful sub-chief. At the time our setting opens, the King of Noricum is Voccio, an experienced fighter and wily politician. Voccio has allied his kingdom to the powerful German tribe known as the Suebi, marrying his sister to the German king, Ariovistus.

Roman influence is strong among the Norii. They control the northern outlets of the passes through the Alps, and many Roman traders cross their lands. Because the passes funnel traffic through small, easily-controlled channels, Noricum has royal tax collectors stationed here to extract either a share of passing goods or an equivalent cash payment. This

funds royal government, mostly a standing force of warriors. These professionals are Norii themselves, who probably would have joined one of the Celtic warrior societies had their own people not given them this outlet for full-time military pursuits.

Noricum is an ally of Rome, and a Roman army led by Papirius Carbo came to help the Norii against a German tribe known as the Cimbri in 120 BC. The Cimbri originally came from Jutland, the peninsula between the North and Baltic seas. Claiming that a vast storm had sunk their lands, they went on a 40-year rampage across Central Europe. Carbo's army met the Cimbri just outside Noreia, and suffered a terrible defeat. A Celtiberian army finally caught the Cimbri and wiped them out, though not until after they had inflicted another massive defeat on the Romans. Rome left the Norii to fend for themselves when the Boii attacked. The defenders managed to hold Noreia against the Boii, who then fled westward into the lands of their allies, the Helvetii.

Many Norii speak Latin; since the Norii have never fought the Romans, they have a more positive view of Roman society than those Celtic people who border directly on the Empire. The Norii drink wine and water it in the Roman fashion. A number of their elite even wear Roman togas, and Roman architecture has supplanted rough Celtic building patterns in a handful of oppida. The Norii still think of themselves as Celts, but with each passing year they become a little more assimilated to Roman Culture. A few generations from now, they will pass formally under Roman rule without conquest.

In battle, Norii warriors try to meld the best of the old with the best of the new. They are still overwhelmingly individualist and do not fight in formation. They wear armor – mail for the elite and Roman-style boiled leather for the poorer fighters – but they swing big Celtic-style swords and are more willing to use bows and slings than most other Celts. They do not paint their bodies and do wear helmets in action.

In future centuries, Rome will rule a province known as Noricum, but this is not the same territory as the kingdom. Roman Noricum will center on an area a few hundred miles to

the east, down on the plains around the upper Danube.

When not under attack, Noricum boasts a flourishing economy. In addition to its control of trade routes over the Alps and its gold mines, the kingdom also produces large amounts of iron and salt and breeds horses.

Albion

> ***How can a Briton be called Good?***
> ***Drunk would be a better name.***
>
> ***—Ausonius***

Celtic culture may have originated on the island that the Romans call Britannia, though this development took place over a widespread area including much of the European continent. By 600 BC the technology and practices of the Hallstatt culture had firm roots in the southeastern part of the island.

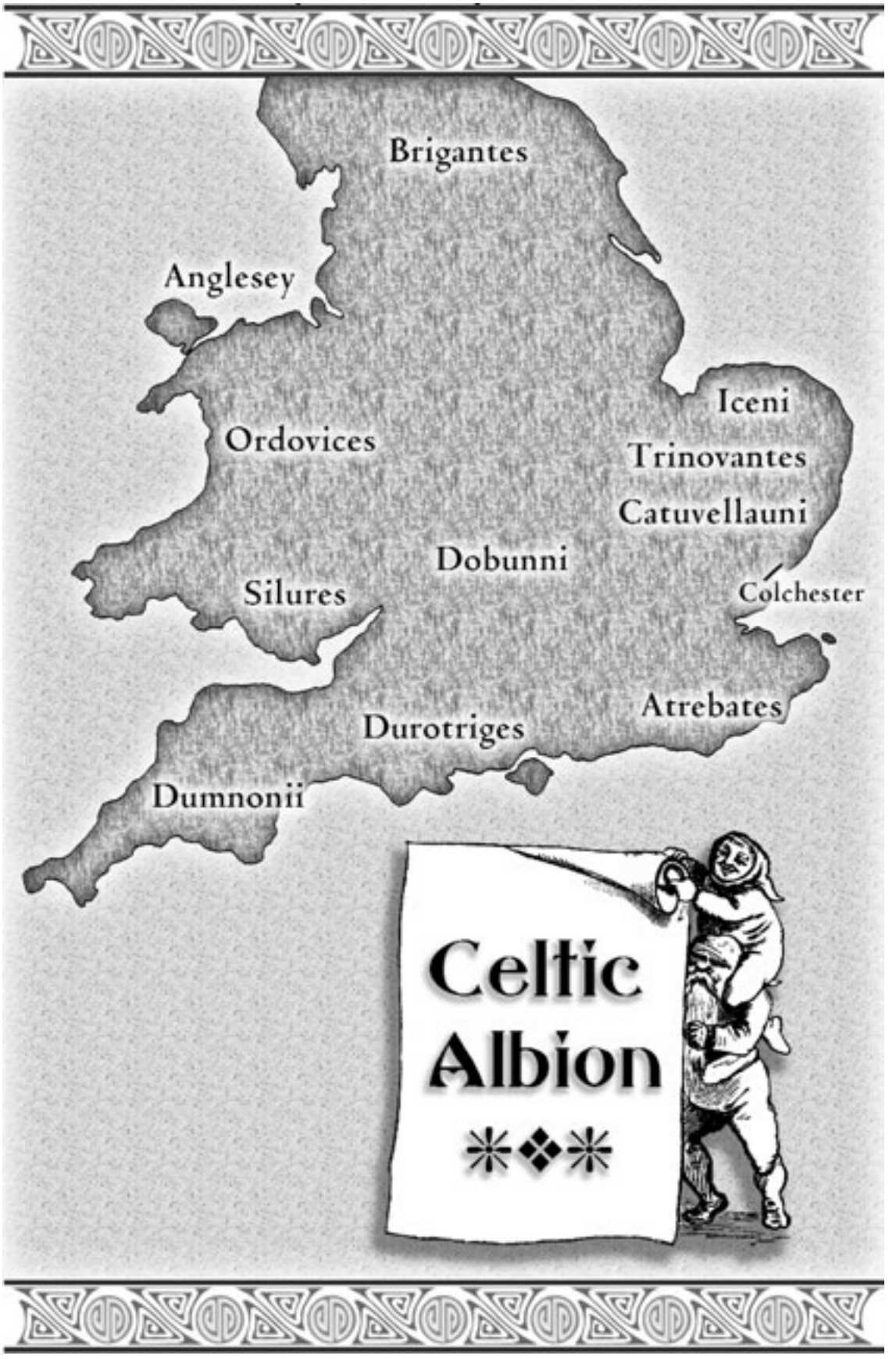
Britain's most famous ancient monument, the structure on Salisbury Plain known as Stonehenge, greatly predates the Celts. It is known throughout the Celtic world and is the subject of many legends. However, its religious significance to the Celts at least is much less than later Celtophiles will make it out to be. Most Celts hold it to be proof that giants once walked the earth or at least that the island's former inhabitants wielded great powers.

Celtic tribes around the body of water that will become known as the English Channel are just starting to begin the process of state formation. There are close connections between the Belgae tribes in Northern Gaul and their close relations in southern Albion, who only immigrated to the island a generation or two ago. The language spoken here is closely related to that of Gaul – what later peoples will call P-Celtic, but the people do not call themselves Celts, using the name Prethani, which the Romans corrupt into Britanni.

The changes brought to the Gauls by the social and military pressures of Roman attack have been felt by the Britons as well. Powerful tribal chieftains are starting to declare themselves kings, and ruling queens (usually a female relation of a dead king) have even appeared. Ruling queens are unusual outside Albion, but on the island a woman is able to muster the political power necessary to enforce her claim to the throne. The British tribes are only just working out the politics of royal succession: beyond the fact that the new ruler should be a relative of the old, there are few rules, and a powerful widow holds many advantages in such a system. Not all queens simply succeed husbands, though: a handful have taken the leadership away from brothers on their father's death. The best-known Celtic warrior queens both came from Albion: Boudicca of the Iceni, and Cartimandua of the Brigantes.

Many British warriors have crossed the channel to participate in the war against Caesar and the Romans. Most of these are fighting as mercenaries, paid by the Belgae and Parisii to help bolster their own forces. Some chiefs of the tribes related to the Belgae have also dispatched warriors of their own volition, as the arguments of the Belgae leaders have convinced them that there is more at stake in this war than simply honor or land. Romans are shocked by the ferocity of these men, and surprised at the much greater proportion of fighting women among them than are found among the Gauls. Few are taken prisoner, as the British tend to kill themselves first, but the handful who are captured are savagely put to death.

Provoked by these expeditions, Caesar himself will invade Albion in 55 BC. And about 90 years later, the Romans will come to stay. The Britons are considered too dangerous to be allowed to roam freely without Roman supervision and are widely felt to be the most


Brigantes
Anglesey
Iceni
Ordovices
Trinovantes
Catuvellauni
Dobunni
Silures
Colchester
Atrebates
Durotriges
Dumnonii
Celtic
Albion

warlike of all the Celts. The Britons are larger than most other Celts and have darker hair and skin. Despite their island location, they are not a seafaring people and dislike overseas travel.

Britons are the most likely among the Celts to paint their bodies for combat (usually blue, using azurite clay). Female warriors at times clad themselves in black robes to increase their fearsome appearance; they are also sometimes found as guards sworn to protect religious sites (chiefly, sacred oak groves).

Like Northern Gaul, Southern Albion is dotted with oppida. Trade has not developed as rapidly, however, and roads are much less common. The oppida are linked by river routes or narrow forest tracks. Albion provides copper, tin, and gold – some from mines pre-dating Celtic culture. Agricultural products are less common as exports because of the underdeveloped road system.

The most important British tribes are the Catuvellauni, who rule a kingdom in Southeastern Albion that covers most of modern Essex, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire, and Suffolk. Other powerful tribes are the Atrebates of modern Sussex, the Iceni of Norfolk, the Trinovantes of East Anglia, and the Brigantes of Yorkshire. Most trade flows through the port of Colchester, and the Trinovantes and Catuvellauni fight one another constantly over control of this vital center.

Eiren

> ***The sweetness of string music, blandness, valor,***
> ***In the south, in the south of Eiren are found,***
> ***It so shall be to the end of time***
> ***With the illustrious race of Eimher.***
>
> ***—The Psalter of Cashel***

While the island west of Albion is at the geographical fringe of the Celtic world, its very isolation will make it the source of most of what later peoples know of the Celts. Ireland is also undergoing the early formation of royal rule as tribes begin to coalesce together under the rule of powerful warriors. There are many kings in Ireland, and, within a few centuries, the most powerful of them will be able to claim the title of High King.

Ireland has no large oppida, and there is only a small region in Leinster (inland southeastern Ireland) where large hill-forts are found. The Irish live in a greatly decentralized state, mostly in small hamlets and individual homesteads. Warfare is constant, and this is the time later Irish Celts will consider the Age of Heroes. As in Albion, some of the Irish tribes practice human sacrifice.

Instead of large fortress-settlements, Ireland is dotted by small walled farms and watchtowers. The Irish fight one another at any excuse, in range wars and cattle raids. They are the most fanatic among the Celts when it comes to heroic combat; few Irish wear armor to war. Women are even more likely to be found bearing arms in Ireland than in Britain.

Lack of a central political authority decreases Roman interest in the Emerald Isle: Roman generals gain glory from defeating huge hosts of enemy warriors, and Ireland lacks the political organization to field large armies. Instead, the High King relies on the Fianna to repel foreign invaders. The Romans will trade with Ireland in later centuries, but never launched the large-scale invasion that General Agricola pondered around 80 AD. However, a large Roman-style fortified camp was discovered north of Dublin in the mid-1990's, and historians are still unsure who built it or why. A major port nearby, at Drumanagh, is host to many Roman traders, however.

3
Celtic Society

Celtic society, like that of Rome, is based on class oppression. The Celts simply use a different model to grind the faces of their lower classes into the dirt. Elements of this organization will survive long after the Celts in the classic medieval arrangement of those who work, those who fight, and those who pray.

In later centuries, some will come to look back on the Celtic world as a social paradise, labeling all things Celtic as good. While the Celts have many admirable traits, however, they are no less a product of their environment than the Germans or Romans. Given the opportunity, their brutality can easily match that of their neighbors. The world is a rough place, with dangerous animals and even more dangerous people. But if one is born into the right circumstances, he or she can get great enjoyment out of their 30 or 40 years.

An Early Proletariat

Most Celts belong to the working class. These men and women face heavy taxes and labor obligations, giving their efforts and what little cash they come across to the comforts of their betters. They do not enjoy the lengthy drinking bouts of the free classes, nor do they eat a tasty and varied diet. Instead they work day after day, tilling the fields for the most part.

Many of these people fall into slavery, often because they cannot pay their debts. Every Celtic community has a large number of slaves, usually the personal property of the chieftain. Slaves are considered less than human but cheaper than animals and worked accordingly. They try desperately to escape and, as a result, are usually bound by iron chains for their entire lives. An escaped slave has an opportunity to start over elsewhere and often will claim to be of higher social status and simply down on his or her luck.

Slaves are chattel – the property of their owners – to be disposed of on a whim. An owner can kill a slave with impunity. They are often used as currency, and Roman wine traders often take them in exchange for their wares – one slave per large amphora of wine. Celts have no feeling of ethnic or tribal solidarity with such lesser beings and have no problem selling them to foreigners.

The division between worker and slave is sometimes hard to define, beyond the absence of chains. Neither participates in battle, nor are they allowed to bear arms. They trail along behind the Celtic armies to do the hard work that always accompanies war: making camp, cutting wood, preparing food, tending animals, digging fortifications, and a thousand other thankless, backbreaking tasks. The working Celt wears a heavy cloak with a pointed hood.

Women of these classes by definition have no honor. Thus, they cannot be raped. They can marry, but only with permission of their clan or tribal chief. Interbreeding between the classes is considered highly offensive; there are no mixed marriages. They share with their menfolk an utter inconsequence in the eyes of the law. Because of the relatively liberal sexual mores of the Celts, their workers and slaves are at least spared the sexual oppression and repeated rape of slaves in Roman or German hands. A Celtic warrior might cast his eye at a comely serving wench, but would lessen his own honor if he forced himself on her.

Some workers must serve the warrior and priest class directly as maids, footmen, body servants, and other household employees. While the physical workload can be much less than fieldwork, this is only true in theory. Celtic warriors don't normally supervise farmwork, having only some vague notion that plants and animals are important to it, and so it is relatively easy to slack off out of sight of the landlord. A servant who angers a drunken Celtic warrior often finds a spear shaft protruding from his or her chest.

When a Celtic tribe is defeated by Romans, its peasants and slaves usually pass into the hands of the Romans. Their will broken by a lifetime of servitude, they usually adapt well to the harsh conditions of Roman slavery. One brutal master is the same as another, and Celtic slaves have little care whether their oppressors speak their language or not. When the conquerors arrive, the Celtic lower classes rarely flee.

These people are not generally included in the descriptions of Celtic life given here. While they are definitely "important" to themselves and their Creator, few if any adventuring characters are going to come from such a background. In the future, they will be ignored by historians and by those claiming to admire Celtic culture. Sadly, this book will, for the most part, do so as well.

The Rising Middle Class

There is not actually a middle class among the Celts in the modern sense. There are, however, some whose work elevates them above the usual drudgery of the peasant. This is an unusual state for the Celts, who have a hard time respecting anyone who is not a warrior or priest. Many of these specialists are foreigners.

Merchants are beginning to appear among the Celts of Central Gaul, but native traders are unusual elsewhere. Celts are not very good bargainers and are thus often cheated. Greek and Roman merchants realize this, and do very profitable business with the Celts. They usually deal directly with the producers and consumers, but in some of the larger oppida there are native merchants.

Celts are divided on the question of whether one base-born can handle weapons. Some blacksmiths are commoners by birth, while others are from the warrior class. These warrior-smiths specialize in arms. Some of them work in smithies from an early age, while a handful of them are injured warriors unable to continue in battle.

There are a number of other craft workers – weavers, brewers, carpenters – who do no farm work, yet are not warriors or priests. They lack the privileges of the upper class, yet those upper classes realize they cannot treat them with the same callous disregard they do the peasantry. They are unlikely to be speared or chopped in half during a warrior's drunken rage. But this is a result of need, not respect.

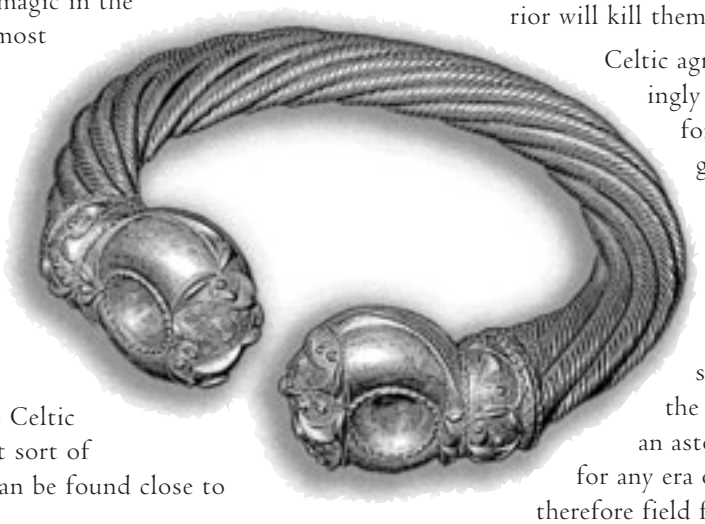
Marking these people as unusual, though, is the fact that they own their own property. Mostly this is an oversight: warriors only understand ownership of land and know the value of such specialists among them. These people are considered direct clients of the tribal chief or king and are under his or her protection. They are neither peasant nor truly free; while they are unlikely to be killed out of hand, they are rarely allowed to leave a chieftain's employ unless they displease him or her.

The Warrior Class

At the top of the Celtic social heap is the warrior class. The Romans call them knights, but this is not an accurate portrayal (ownership of a horse has no bearing on warrior status).

Chiefs are always chosen from the warrior class, and a man's ability to wage war effectively is the best test of his fitness to lead. A warrior has the right to bear arms and to wear the status symbols of his or her class: golden torcs around the neck and arm rings (see below) and, for men, the characteristic flowing mustache. Warriors do not belittle themselves with manual labor: when not fighting or training for war, they hunt and sometimes will work metal (considered a noble occupation). And they drink copious amounts of alcohol while discussing their feats. Their privileged status gives them the time and inclination for adventuring; after all, unless their tribe is at war, they have nothing better to do than to try to make themselves into heroes worthy of legend.

The more unusual the adventure, the greater the status gained for undertaking it. Celts believe there is magic in the world, and the most desirous adventures involve investigating the unknown. Simply going off and killing something or someone is also enjoyable to the Celtic warrior, but that sort of entertainment can be found close to home.



The greatest warriors even change their name, taking on a nickname that somehow relates to their accomplishments. For example, the Arvernii military leader Vercingetorix's name translates as "Great Leader of Warriors." No one knows his real name; this is held secret lest it be used in magical attacks against him.

Warriors often busy themselves with minor skirmishes against other tribes and clans. Cattle-raiding is a common pursuit and is not considered a major crime. If the owner wants to keep his or her cattle safe, then he or she should do a better job protecting the herd. While Celts have a definite preference for pork over beef in their diets, there is no glory to be gained in a pig raid. It's all about the honor.

Celtic warriors are usually landowners, but they do no manual labor and give little thought to managing their farms. The farmers are typically sharecroppers, and some realize that the warriors have no conception of crop yields – the shares they turn in are usually much lower than the amount demanded. As long as the ale and mead keep flowing, the peasants can cheat their landlords with impunity.

There is no ladder of responsibility between the Celtic warrior and the laborers over whom he or she has dominion. The warrior feels no responsibility to protect them from harm, beyond the practical effect that he or she will run out of food and ale if the peasants are killed by marauding enemies. Likewise, the peasantry provides these goods because the warrior will kill them if they do not.

Celtic agriculture is surprisingly productive, and the forests provide rich game as well. This allows Celtic society to support a large class of armed parasites. As many as 20 percent of some tribes fall into the aristocratic category, an astonishing percentage for any era or people. Tribes can therefore field far more warriors than non-Celtic enemies usually expect.

The Priestly Classes

There are several types of priest within the Celtic World. Some tend the great sanctuaries, stands of ancient trees that remember when gods walked the Earth. Some look after the spiritual needs of the clans and tribes and also serve as healers. Still others wander in search of

knowledge. Romans and Greeks refer to all Celtic holy people as "druids," but this is not accurate. Germans, sharing the Celtic reverence for trees, usually understand the difference.

Druid

Best remembered in the future will be the Druids, though they are numerically a rather small group. The name literally means "oak knowledge," which refers to deep and profound wisdom rather than specific study of the oak tree. It can be more liberally interpreted as "highly wise."

Druids exist to study nature, and they hold the vital responsibility of determining planting and harvest times. They also serve as veterinarians. Though they cloak their utterings as divine directives and doubtless believe them to be so, the practical effect is that they enforce quarantine of diseased herds of domestic animals and thus keep losses much lower than those suffered by other peoples. They study the weather and stars in their quest for agricultural knowledge and are their tribes' keepers of this information. Druidic medicine is closely related to the study of nature and plants: they tend the sick with herbal remedies.

Disputes are often settled by Druids, and they enforce their decisions by refusing to allow violators to sacrifice to the gods. The gods only recognize sacrifices overseen by Druids; thus these priests can cut off divine favor from those who displease them. Druids do not pay taxes and are exempt from military service, although they are allowed to go to war if they wish. For a Druid to fight against another Celtic tribe is considered a very bad breach, but wielding weapons against a German or Roman is acceptable.

Druids come from the warrior class; a commoner cannot easily be elevated to such lofty status. It's thought that most Druids are women, though few non-Druids ever see enough of these priests to form a useful opinion. In Gaul, one male Druid is elected as Supreme Druid for life and reigns from the territory of the Carnutes tribe in north-central Gaul. In case of disagreement between Druids, he renders the final verdict.

A would-be Druid learns the many necessary skills at one of the Druidic gatherings where senior members teach the young. It is a hard course, with massive rote memorizations. There are no school buildings as such: several of the more wealthy tribes host these sessions for the prestige they garner. The teaching itself usually takes place in an oak grove, and the site is often consecrated.

Trees are sacred to Druids, especially the oak, but buildings are not. They have no more use for monumental architecture than other Celts. Some have made use of the ancient monument of Stonehenge, which they find interesting, but the site is not holy. Nature is holy to Druids, and Stonehenge is obviously the work of human

beings. The Druids are also impressed by the gigantic Great Menhir found in Armorica (latter-day Brittany), but, like Stonehenge, they view it with academic curiosity rather than religious awe. While the future will label Stonehenge and just about every other carved rock in the Celtic lands "Druidic" in origin, the Druids themselves would laugh at such an association.

Human sacrifice is not common among the Druids, but it does occur. As a practice, it has died out among all the continental Celts and is only found in Albion. There, the more warlike tribes still propitiate their war gods with the blood of their enemies. Among many tribes, there is a strong belief that the world is constantly threatened by evil, and it is the Druids who hold this evil at bay.

High-ranking Druids are often siblings of tribal chiefs, and their counsel is sought in political matters. Druids are whole-hearted supporters of the war against the Romans and a major driving force of the resistance. Romans in turn find their ways barbaric and assault the sacred groves in an effort to stamp out the religion. Romans are not, as a rule, religious bigots: it is the political role of the Druids in stirring up resistance that makes them an enemy. The Romans will eventually be very successful in this effort; Christian Romans a few centuries hence will wipe out most records of the Druidic faith. The latter-day "Druids" found in the 21st Century are a neo-pagan revival incorporating many disparate beliefs in addition to the early Celtic religious system.

Druids interact fully in the Celtic social system, attending feasts and drinking themselves silly. They repair to their groves for religious rites, discussions with other Druids, and sometimes for meditation, but they are not divorced from their community.

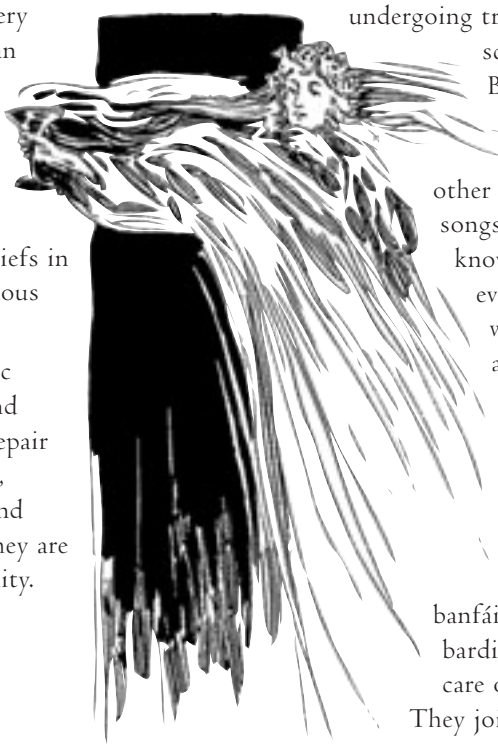
Vates

A second, and less well known priestly class among the Celtic people are the Vates (literally, "seer"). Vates are rare on the continent and are most often found in Ireland and sometimes in Albion. They interpret sacrifices and natural phenomena to determine the will of the gods. Vates keep the great calendars, and maintain shrines in sacred groves. They have a great practical knowledge of mathematics, but refuse to apply this to worldly pursuits. Instead, they carefully study flights of birds, clouds, dreams, storms, and sticks thrown on the ground to sense divine will. To be touched by the gods is to court madness, and many Vates are not quite right as a result.

Unlike Druids, Vates (called Ovates in some Celtic dialects) do not truly fit in with Celtic society. Warriors fear what a drunken Vates might spill and are uncomfortable with their attendance at feasts. Tradition ties a Vates to his or her sacred grove, and they rarely wander from this site. Everyone likes it better this way.

Banfáith

Only women can become banfáith, a sort of combination priest and bard. They share the bard's abilities with music and song, undergoing training at bardic schools (see Chapter 7). But during their training, it becomes obvious that they have other powers as well: their songs and poetry show a knowledge of future events. Ollamh, those wise master teachers, are always watching for this ability in their students but seldom encounter it.



Because this power could be used to political advantage, banfáith pass from the bardic community into the care of the priestly class. They join the Druids in the

Status

All Celtic characters have a trait called Status. This is a measure of their standing within their respective communities. It also translates outside the individual clan or tribe. A warrior from another tribe with a high status is well-respected even among rivals.

Status is acquired through gaining levels and performing great deeds. Each time the character goes up in level, he or she gets 1 Status Point. If the character performs an heroic deed and then composes a fine poem about it to recount to others (Perform Skill check DC 15), he or she gains an additional 2 Status Points. If the deed is instead told by a Fili, 5 Status Points are earned.

Status Points are used to buy Status Levels. The Status Level is the measure of one's standing within the Celtic community. Status Levels are purchased at a rate indicated below:

Status Level	Cost in Status Points
0	—
1	15
2	25
3	50
4	75
5	150

A character who is named chief automatically gains a Status Level. Note that once Status is used to purchase a Status Level, it is gone. It must be earned again so that the character can purchase a new level.

sacred groves, using their abilities to aid the Druids and vates in their divinations. A banfáith is not allowed to wander like typical bards, and thus some choose to disguise this ability rather than be tied to the Druids.

Prestige

Celts of the upper class are social climbers, constantly concerned about their position in society and how others view them. This extends to both their appearance and their behavior. Every act of an upper-class Celt is first calculated in terms of its effect on that Celt's prestige. There are several ways to increase one's prestige besides valor in battle or the hunt.

Chiefs and Clientage

Authority in the Celtic world usually descends along bonds known as clientage. An individual or group pledges loyalty to a stronger individual or group, which then in turn pledges to defend the client from harm. These pledges are of course only applicable to people possessing honor and thus able to enter into contracts.

While clans are family-based, there is an even more important client bond within them. The sub-chief who leads the clan is the patron of all of its warriors; they in turn are his clients. They follow the sub-chief in battle, and obey his decisions in other matters.

The clans are in turn beholden to their tribal chief. This is a permanent bond; a clan does not have the option of transferring its allegiance to another tribe. The chief is typically the greatest warrior of the tribe, or the sub-chief most noted for wisdom. When a chief dies or is forced into retirement, he is often but not necessarily followed by one of his sons.

Some bypass the clan system, becoming direct clients of a chieftain. These are often specialist commoners (blacksmiths, brewers etc.) or warriors seeking to attach themselves to an accomplished battlefield leader. There is usually no penalty for leaving a patron's entourage: if he or she wants to keep a herd of followers, then they should do a better job providing for them.

The chief is the living embodiment of the gods' favor. Though not a god himself, he is a semi-sacred being. He is symbolic of the land and especially its fertility. If the chief becomes sexually impotent, crops will fail, and he must be replaced. While it is not rigidly enforced that a failed chief must die, he usually will

Status (cont'd)

Status Level conveys a number of benefits on the character who has it. First and foremost, the owner may add his or her Status Level to his or her Charisma Bonus. Second, each of the following effects is usable once per day per level of Status:

- **Cause Fear (Ex):** The character's reputation is such that he or she can frighten would-be opponents. The area of effect is a 10-foot cone extending out from the character's facing.
- **Inspire (Ex):** Those fighting on the same side as the Status-holding character can benefit from their confidence in him or her. They gain a +2 Morale Bonus to Saving Throws and a +1 Morale Bonus to attack rolls.
- **Smite (Ex):** So impressed with the character is his or her opponent in battle that the character can use his or her Status to gain a bonus to attack. The character gains a one-round +2 Status Bonus to the attack roll.

choose to undergo a ritual sacrifice to give up his life and redeem his people in the eyes of the gods. A chief who wishes to maintain power must demonstrate his virility early and often; prowess in love-making is even more important than prowess in battle.

Women can become chiefs and sub-chiefs, though this is unusual. Most female leaders worked their way close to the seat of power through marriage to a former chief. There are no formal rules barring women from power, but the informal ones are not easy to overcome.

A chief must have a large retinue of clients. These give him legitimacy, and their swords can be used to force his will on the sub-chiefs. Having flocks of parasites to sing his praises helps as well. A chief's clients are individually bonded to him; because this bond usually passes to his children, it gives a dead chief's son a powerful advantage in taking his father's place.

Tribes also have clients, in this case other, smaller tribes that seek protection from a larger and stronger group. This is very common in Gaul, where Roman pressure has frightened many small tribes. In these cases, the smaller tribe gives hostages to the larger to assure its loyalty and good behavior. These hostages are young men, up-and-coming warriors from leading families. They fight alongside the tribe's chief in wartime and often become close friends with him, his family, and the other tribal leaders. It is considered very bad form to openly discuss that these same close friends will merrily slit the throats of the hostages if their client tribe misbehaves. Women are sometimes traded as hostages as well; it is a social violation to demand or offer a female hostage, but it is considered a highly honorable act for a woman to volunteer. She thus gives honor to the tribe accepting the hostages (she is indicating a regard

Chiefs and Clients

Clients help add to a chief's status. The more clients he or she is able to control, the greater is his or her standing within the Celtic community. A chief gains Status Points based on the number of tribes under his or her control as listed below:

Number of Tribes	Status Points
1 Small Tribe	5
2 Small or 1 Medium Tribe	15
2 Medium or 1 Large Tribe	35
2 Large Tribes	75
3 or more Large Tribes	100

A chief with three or more Large Tribes as clients can declare himself or herself a king or queen.

Parasites

Parasites are hangers-on, whose job it is to show adulation towards the character. A character must be of at least 5th Level and of Status Level 1 to gain parasites. All such individuals must be provided for by the character, and they are not particularly helpful in combat except when the character is chosen to be his or her tribe's champion.

Each time a character gains a level of Status, he or she may roll to acquire Parasites. This is a Charisma check made at DC 15. For each Character Level he or she has above 5th, the character may add +1 to the roll. If it is successful, consult the chart below to see how many parasites flock to the character.

Status Level	Parasites
1	1d6
2	1d8
3	2d6
4	2d10
5	3d8

Note that if Parasites are not well-cared for (fed well and enjoying the benefits of the master's patronage) they will abandon him or her.

for their honor – that she knows no harm will come to her) and to her own, as her display of bravery reflects on all of her people.

Trading hostages is a Celtic tradition to seal bargains between clans or tribes. It is understood that the holder may execute the hostages if the agreement is violated, but this rarely happens. Instead, social bonds are reinforced by the hostage's stay in much the same manner as fostering children. Arranged marriages between ruling families are another form of hostage-giving, though once again it is bad form to openly suggest that the daughter given in marriage will be killed if her father breaks his word to her new in-laws.

Celtic tribes have also exchanged hostages with Romans, and in these agreements death is much more common. In addition to the obvious dangers, the two peoples often fail to understand one another's ways and interpret confusion as treachery. The death of a hostage hurts his or her home tribe greatly and is seen as a failure on the part of the chief. Since Celts are reluctant to murder women, they are rarely exchanged as hostages. Romans have no compunctions in this regard, and will demand women and children as hostages because they think their potential deaths will intimidate the Celts.

Rome figured out the client system long ago since it is not very different from Roman practice. Over the years, skilled Roman negotiators have turned Celtic tribes into clients of Rome. For example, the powerful Aedui are often called "allies" but actually are clients with far less freedom of action than a true ally could exert.

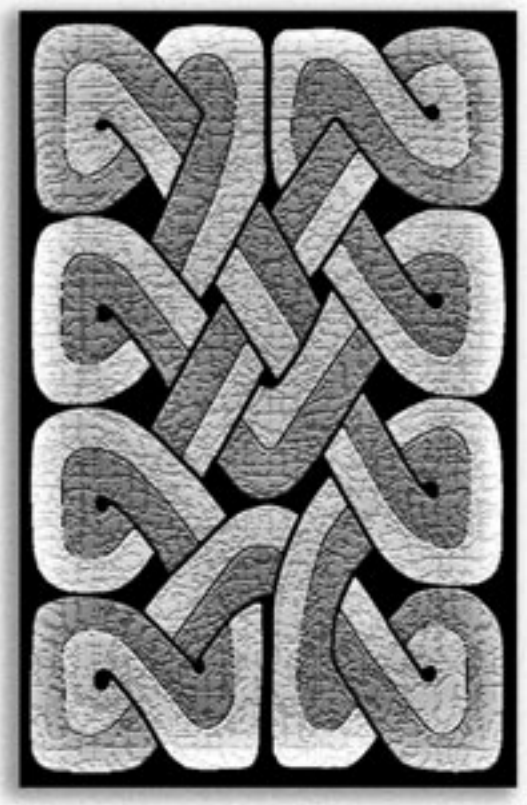
In recent years, when a tribe gains a number of other tribes as its clients the dominant tribe's chief has taken to calling himself "king." There is no Celtic Empire and very few Celtic states in the modern sense, but this development is pointing in that direction. These kings are much more common in tribal alliances opposed to the Romans, and some of them are beginning to build the trappings of formal government such as regular coinage and officials in charge of organizing the war effort. The concept is so new that there is no accepted process by which a new king is chosen when one dies, or how a king might be deposed. But the Celts are finding that loose coalitions of tribes simply can't stand up to the Roman military machine. Defeat fractures them, and tribes that feel they are bearing an unfair burden defect to the Roman side. Gallic chiefs now realize that they must surrender some of their power to a higher authority, who can bring the full might of Celtic Gaul to bear against Caesar's Romans.

Status Symbols

A leader is known by the number and quality of his or her followers. While the Celts have been a settled people for many generations, they still carry cultural memories of their wandering years. Gold and cattle, both of them easily transported, are the measure of wealth.

A famous warrior attracts others, some of them hoping to learn or sharpen new skills but most wanting to simply bask in the reflected glory. And a warrior can take no pleasure in great deeds without someone to adore them. It is a symbiotic relationship - in this age long before any form of mass media, heroes need jock-sniffers. These people are called "parasites"; literally, "fellow-diners" (the word will come to have a negative meaning only centuries in the future).

To help inspire such adulation, a prospective leader must keep his or her followers in meat and alcohol. Little is more important to the Celtic warrior than hospitality. This is meant both in the modern sense of graciously providing food and shelter for visitors and strangers, and in the sense of keeping a retinue of followers. One achieves greatness through reputation, and one of the unspoken truisms of Celtic life is that a reputation for valor in battle is greatly enhanced by a good dinner spread. The warrior provides the food and drink, and, in return, those who consume it confirm the warrior's greatness.



A warrior can accept hospitality from one of lesser status though never, ever from a slave or peasant. The warrior takes from these people; it is never an option for the peasant to make a gift to a lord. The warrior can't accept a lesser warrior's hospitality very often, however, without imperiling his or her own status. For a great warrior to visit the home of an up-and-coming warrior and accept their food and drink is to convey great status on the youngster. To do so too often is to become subservient to the other, and the typical Celt would rather die than give up status.

A mediocre warrior cannot become great by handing out lots of good food, but he or she can most certainly gain a reputation for adequacy by these means. Likewise, those who feel slighted in terms of feasting will find their memories of the host's great deeds in battle becoming ever less great with the passage of time. A skilled bard, preferably one of fili status, helps the guests understand the host's greatness by composing ballads to their good qualities. As the proper Celtic warrior also recites poetry, the host hopes that these songs of their greatness will stick with the diners and be repeated elsewhere.

Bards and fili are perfectly willing to inflate one's deeds in exchange for a good meal, and a well-fed host of admirers will nod their agreement. However, part of the bard's code is that they are not required to praise their host; they can sing their song about anyone present. If the host fails to please the bard with food or gifts, inviting him or her to the gathering can very definitely backfire. Part of the bard's skill is to craft the song of praise in such a manner that the audience is not exactly sure who the subject might be until the very end.

A retinue of regular followers is important to the warrior, and even more so to the chief or subchief. This confirms their fitness to rule. But the admiration of the same cast of fawning minions grows tiresome. To truly gain a great reputation, one must host visitors. This gives adventurers a great advantage, for if they are of the proper social standing, warriors across the Celtic world will want to offer them hospitality. The host can then tell the visitors of his or her great deeds and gain the admiration of a new audience. Hopefully, they will be so impressed with their host that they will spread word of his or her greatness. Polite Celtic society will refer to the host's valor or wisdom rather than the quality and quantity of food and drink, but all know what is really meant. The chance to spread status to other clans and even other tribes – possibly even to foreign peoples – is not to be passed up and is a worthy investment of resources, however. Traveling Celtic warriors will find themselves able to gain food and shelter as in no other setting, real or imagined.

The social rules for hosting strangers are very strict. It is extremely bad form to ask a visitor's business before they have had food and drink. The level of trust involved is very high, and no Celtic warrior would dream of breaking these bonds. Non-Celts feel very differently, and are happy to use this naiveté against the Celts, who will very innocently invite enemies into their midst or enter their lair alone and unarmed. That they would be harmed in the guise of hospitality is literally unthinkable to the Celt. It is a violation so grievous as to be completely alien to Celtic thinking.

Similar to the status-related feast is the tradition known as potlatch. Along with food and drink, the host also gives out gifts. These vary depending on the status of the host, but at the top rungs of society they can be very expensive: gold, jewels, well-crafted golden items, exquisite weapons, and the like. Those who accept the gifts – and it is a deadly insult to decline – then are obligated to return the favor at a feast of their own as best they can.

Potlatch competition can become fierce, and wealthy warriors are known to become destitute in the search for greater status. At the extreme end, some are known to give away their entire worldly wealth and, at the climax of the feast, stab themselves in the heart with their last belonging, a dagger held back for this purpose. Thus, they die happy, having achieved the maximum possible status among their peers. Older warriors at the end of their run are particularly known for this final act.

Hosting

Hosting a feast or a potlatch confers Status on the one who does so. However, it cannot be done cheaply. A character must spend at least 100 times his or her Character Level in gold to provide enough food and alcohol for the festivities. This is the least he or she can do. Doubling or tripling that amount puts on a more impressive feast and, accordingly, gains more Status. The chart below outlines how much Status may be gained.

Character Level	Amount Spent	Status Gained
1-5	Minimum	5
	Double	8
	Triple	12
6-10	Minimum	10
	Double	15
	Triple	20
11-15	Minimum	15
	Double	25
	Triple	35
16-20	Minimum	25
	Double	50
	Triple	75

A variation of potlatch gift-giving is to bestow one's possessions on the gods. Richly decorated shields, weapons and other ornate items are buried or thrown in rivers supposedly to honor the gods, but actually to impress other people. Even severed heads are donated in this manner. This yields a sneaky advantage in the race for status: gifts given in a potlatch increase the wealth of those who receive them, thus giving them that many more resources for the competition. Those given to the gods are taken out of the game, and do not benefit rivals. The status-climber can't do this too often, lest the tactic become obvious, but it can be very effective when chosen at just the right time.

Hosting (cont'd)

Other factors can influence the amount of Status gained from the event. These are listed below:

Factor	Status Gain
Character of higher Status Level attends	+5
Fili recites flattering poem about host	+5
Bard recites flattering poem about host	+3
A good fight occurs at the feast	+2
Fili snubs host in a poem	-5
Bard snubs host in a poem	-3
A bad fight (someone gets mad) occurs	-1
Host is Status Level 2 and spends minimum	-1
Host is Status Level 3 and spends minimum	-3
Host is Status Level 4 and spends minimum	-5
Host is Status Level 5 and spends minimum	-10

A potlatch is measured by what the host gives away. He or she must spend a minimum amount of cash to put on the feast as though it were an ordinary one, and he or she must spend the same amount of money in valuable gifts that are given away. All of the Status awards and penalties above are doubled at a potlatch. It is a dangerous thing to do (financially), but it can pay off in huge rewards for Status.

Economics

While the concept of trade is well-known to the Celts, very few of them take up a career as a merchant. Celts don't like to be separated from their families and tribe. As a result, most trade among Celts is very short-ranged. Foreign traders bring items from far away, some of which are greatly desired by the Celts. Wine tops the list of popular imports.

Family and tribal bonds regulate Celtic commerce rather than laws. A tradesman does not cheat his customers because it would be dishonorable to do so, not because he fears punishment by the non-existent government. Roman, Greek, and Carthaginian merchants have found it very easy to cheat the Celts for this reason since they often have no reason to look for dishonesty. However, should a Celt catch a foreigner in a lie, he or she will usually become enraged. Little is more fundamental to a Celt than the power of the truth, and they usually believe themselves honor-bound to kill liars on the spot. These peoples also differ in their definitions of "lie:" what a Celt believes to be a black-hearted deception worthy of death, a Greek might merely describe as a "negotiating tactic."

Currency

Alexander the Great and his father, Philip II of Macedon, introduced the concept of currency to the Celts. The two Macedonian kings hired Celtic mercenaries from the Danube valley for their wars in Greece and against Persia. These men served as light infantry and as cavalry and were highly valued in both roles.

But the gold coins they received in return made a deep impression on their tribes, who sought Macedonian minting expertise. The Macedonians gladly provided this technology since it made trade between the two peoples much easier, and soon the Celts were striking

coins of their own, usually adorned with horses and sheaves of wheat.

Celtic tribes make their own coins of gold and less often of silver. Copper coins are known but found more rarely. Celts do not strike bronze or iron coins as do a handful of Greek cities. In the Celtic world, specialized craftsmen make the dies for the coins. The coins are much more detailed and finely made than those of the Mediterranean world. First, blanks are made from gold or silver, which are melted and poured into special clay molds. The die is a two-part affair: the blank is fitted into the heavy lower half, and the upper half then fitted over it. A worker then strikes the die with a heavy iron hammer, smashing the design into the gold or silver of the coin. Celtic minters are very good at this, and double-strikes or "smeared" coins, found often in Greek and Roman coinage, are unknown among the Celts.

Because the Celts have no central government, the coinage is easily debased (mixed with inferior metals). And coins are commonly "shaved:" an unscrupulous trader will keep a small container out of sight and use a sharp blade to remove a sliver of gold from the edge of each coin he or she handles, dropping these ill-gotten gains into the container. Celtic coins rapidly lose their original value, and traders often weigh them or even bite them. Gold mixed with a base metal is typically harder than pure or near-pure metal. Pure gold is very soft and will yield teeth marks if bitten.

Powerful tribes usually mint their own coins with the image of their chief or king on them. This is yet another way to gain status, and the king or chief will give away many of these coins – what better way to make sure the recipient remembers the gift than to hand out pieces of gold with the giver's picture stamped on them?

Precious Metals

Other precious metals found in fantasy games do not exist in the real world. Platinum has no place at all in this setting or most medieval-based ones, for that matter. It will not be discovered in the laboratory until 1557, and not in any mintable quantities until 1750. It is rarely found in nuggets and difficult to smelt without modern technology. A party of adventurers is about as likely to come across a stash of platinum coins as it is one of refined uranium.

Electrum is an alloy of gold and silver, and this is the state in which most gold is found. It is very rarely left in this form for decorative work and is almost always refined into its component metals. No sane metalsmith purposely combines refined gold with refined silver.

Silver is not popular among the Celts. Smiths rarely work in it, preferring gold. Silver items found in the Celtic world are usually imports, bought or looted from other peoples. Celts hold silver to be a precious metal; they simply do not find it as alluring as gold. The only Celts to use much silver are the Galatians, and those from Southeastern Europe (the area that will someday be known as the Balkans). Contact with the Greeks and especially the Thracians (known as master silversmiths) has heightened their appreciation for this metal, and they are even known to make torcs and arm-rings from it. Other Celts scorn these decorations as second-rate, but their owners seem quite fond of silver's brightness.

Other Valuables

Celts like gold, and both men and women like jewelry very much. Most important of these is the torc, a heavy gold neck-piece unique to the Celtic world. As the neck connects the head to the body, so does the torc symbolize the connection of the spirit (embodied in the head) to the material world (the body). When Celts strip off their clothes for battle, the torc always remains in place. If a warrior is not wearing his or her torc when battle breaks out, putting it on is even more important than seizing weapons. The torc is sometimes rather thick; the huge amount of gold embodied in it symbolizes the wearer's wealth and power. Most Celtic gold is mined in the lands of the Eburones, one of the Belgae tribes.

Celtic warriors also wear arm-rings, smaller and thinner versions of the torc placed around the upper arms, about halfway up the bicep. These are usually more for ceremonial use than the torc since a warrior can easily lose his arm rings in battle if he sweats heavily, and a ring tight enough to stay in place is also thought to needlessly constrict the arm muscles while swinging a sword. Like the torc, arm-rings are always made of gold.

Both men and women wear rings on their fingers, usually made of gold. A heavy brooch fastens their cloak, and it's not unusual for a Celt to wear several just to show them off. Sometimes arm-rings are accompanied by a matching set of ankle-rings, though these are usually limited to warriors who intend to fight naked, as otherwise they would be obscured by trousers or tunics. Earrings are the sign of a magician; the typical Celt refuses to wear them. Those few who do call such attention to themselves wear very plain earrings: small, simple hoops of gold.

Enemies of the Celts, particularly the Romans, are well aware that fallen Celtic warriors can be the source of great riches. Celts will also loot the dead, but this is considered shameful and is not practiced openly: the looters sneak back to the battlefield after dark. To take a dead hero's torc lacks the honor of taking his head, but it is a valuable piece of metal and few value their honor over a pound or two of gold if they can get away with it. Romans of course have no such inhibitions, and a private soldier can become a wealthy man if he can squirrel away several torcs and arm-rings out of sight of his officers (who also covet the easy loot).

Amber comes south from the area around the Baltic, crossing Celtic lands on its way to Greece and Rome. The Celts buy some of it from passing traders and consider it highly beautiful, but they are not as obsessed with the fossilized sap as the Romans. Because they are not willing to pay as much and amber is easily transported, most of it passes through Celtic hands without remaining.

Trade and Travel

Celts normally do not engage in long-distance trade themselves. The rough roads leading northward from the Mediterranean world are the result of years of passage by Greek, Roman, and Carthaginian merchants. Wagon caravans are sometimes seen, owned by foreigners and guarded by Celtic mercenaries hired for the trip. River boats also carry goods, again under the ownership of outlanders.

In the quest for status, ownership of exotic goods helps confirm a leader's higher order of being. The Celtic elite drink wine rather than ale and also greatly desire the accessories that go with wine-drinking: bronze wine jugs or fine pottery cups – so that any onlookers will know

Luxury Items

Treasure can translate into Status. A character gains 1 point of Status for every 100 gold he or she spends on an item. Note that the piece can be looted. What matters most is having it. This Status can only be gained once per item.

they are drinking wine and not merely ale. For it does no good to spend on luxury if no one sees you do it.

Celtic craftsmen make fine clothing and weapons, and the elite enjoy these. But to truly show off their wealth and power, they need luxury goods from lands far away. Luxury goods of obvious foreign origin are greatly desired, and important to maintain status. There is little difference between buying such goods and taking them as loot in wartime; the result in increased status is the same. A Roman trader who can provide these goods will find a warm welcome among the Celts even as the same warriors swear to kill all others of his people.

In exchange for these products, Celts sell slaves from among their own tribes. Rome has an insatiable demand for expendable human labor. They also sell metals, both refined and as ores. Cattle and livestock head south, as well as salted and smoked pork (Romans like pork and are amazed by Celtic methods of preservation). Celtic woolen goods are in very high demand: the brightly colored Celtic woolen cloak has become a Roman status symbol. A small amount of grain goes from Gaul to Roman territory, but most of this is consumed by Massilia and the other coastal towns of the Province – Rome herself is fed by ship, with grain coming from Sicily and Egypt.

Overland trade routes snake up the river valleys of Gaul and then down to the Atlantic coast. The mountain passes through the Alps also admit wagon trains from Roman lands. Very little trade flows overland to Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean world: goods going to and from this region are trans-shipped at Roman ports in Northern Italy.

Most Celtic tribes, even those living along the coast, are not sea-faring people. The concept is understood, but Celts rarely look to the waters. There are exceptions. The Veneti of Western Gaul, the region that will one day be called Brittany, build huge wooden ships with deep keels. They equip them with cowhide sails and rig them with chains rather than the ropes common in most of the nautical world. These ships conduct trade up and down the Atlantic Coast. Some of the Belgae also maintain smaller ships, conducting limited commerce between Albion and Gaul.

Trade has enriched the Veneti, one of the handful of Celtic tribes to depend on commerce rather than agriculture. Roman traders bring wine from Italy and the Roman Province (Gallia Transalpina) over the low hills near Tolosa (Toulouse) to the Garrone Valley and from there by river boat and coastal shipping to the Veneti home ports. From there, usually by way of the huge natural port that

will one day be known as Quiberon Bay, the big ships of the Veneti take the clay jars across to Albion. Traders would prefer to transfer the wine into barrels since they are much sturdier, but their customers demand the big clay amphorae used by Greeks and Romans as these signal to all who see them that the wine came from far to the south. The British Isles have never been warm enough to grow wine grapes, nor (despite the claims of some eager to explain away climate change in hopes of political gain) will they be at any time over the next two thousand years. But wine is very popular there and, to a lesser extent, in Ireland. The Veneti make huge profits trading the drink for cattle, copper, silver, tin, and slaves.

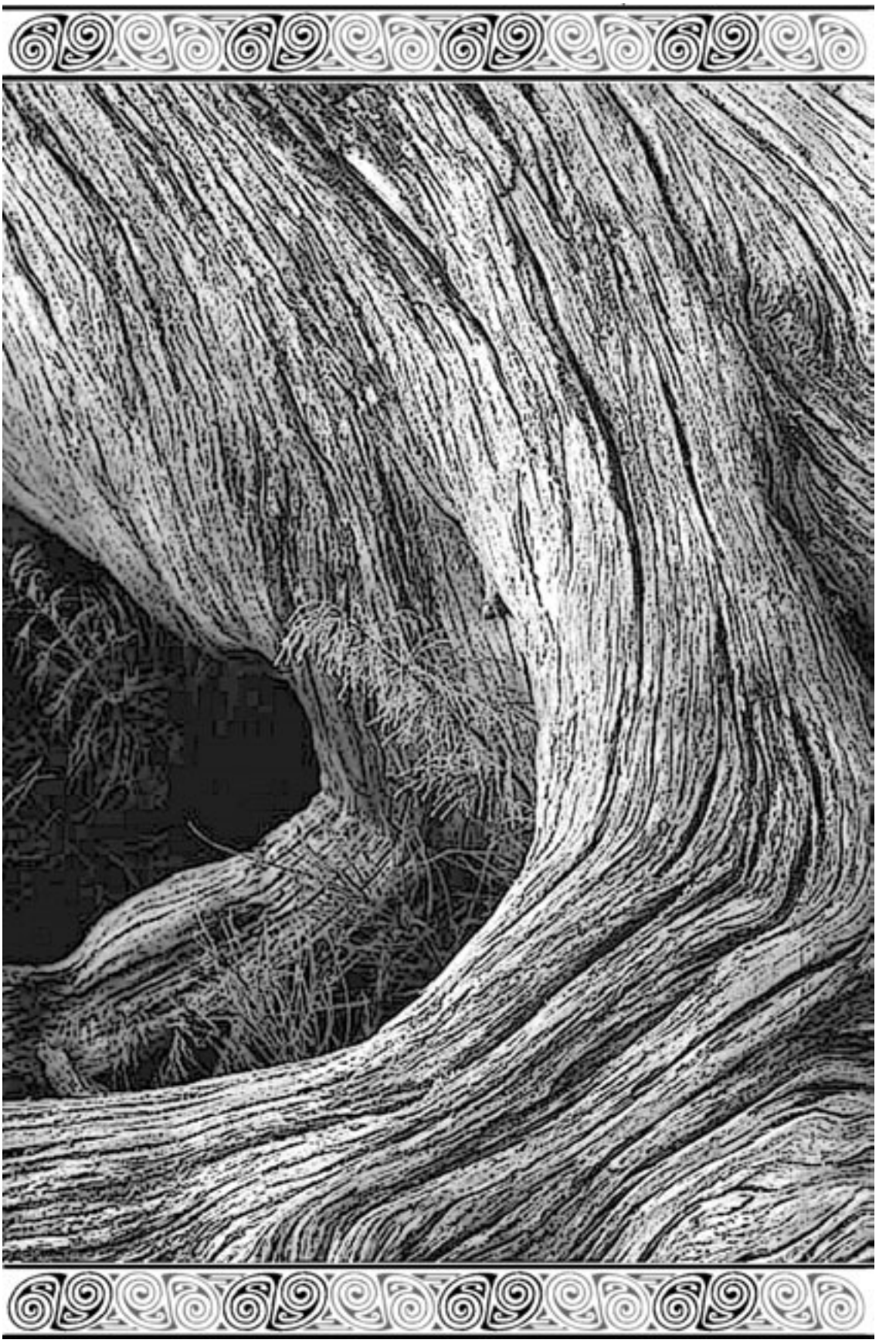
Seagoing ships traded with Albion long before the Celts arrived. Phoenicians sailed from their trading posts in Southern Hispania to obtain tin and other metals. This route is still used by some Greek-owned vessels but is not heavily traveled. The Veneti rarely sail south, but have been known to take goods to and from Gades (Cadiz), the big Greek/Carthaginian trading city just outside the Pillars of Hercules. Their ships have entered the Mediterranean out of curiosity, but do not do so as a rule.

In Ireland, fishermen use the leather-covered boat known as the curragh. The curragh is a wooden frame with the hides stretched tight over it and shrunk into place. They are surprisingly seaworthy and capable of long voyages though they are open to the weather. Eventually, some brave Irish monks will use these boats to journey out into the Atlantic and will settle on Iceland. Celtic legend is full of mystical islands somewhere to the west amid the great ocean, but hard information on sailing to them is impossible to find. Everyone knows the islands are out there, but no one will admit to having actually seen them. They are thought to be inhabited by magical beings or perhaps by the dead.

Among the Celts, most travelers are out for adventure, trying to gain status by imitating the traveling heroes of adventure stories. Otherwise, travel is unusual. Most Celts never leave an area more than 10 miles from their birthplace except to go to war.

In a huge exception, sometimes entire tribes will uproot themselves and migrate to a new homeland. Celtic fertility (both human and agricultural) is easily capable of overpopulating a tribe's territory, and something has to give. When this happens, the tribe moves out as a whole rather than send out a limited number of colonists. Huge wagon trains trail behind the vanguard of warriors, as 50,000 or more people march across the land. These movements usually spark wars – few tribes are warm to the notion of crowds of strangers wandering through their fields and eating their crops and game. And as the Celts have a very loose grasp of geography, these wandering tribes rarely have a very clear idea of just where they are going; they can march about for years, sometimes in circles, until they find a suitable place that's either uninhabited or home to a weaker people they can defeat and drive away. This of course puts the losers on the road in the same condition.

Such a migration sparked the current war with Rome. The Helvetii left their Alpine homes during famine in search of greener pastures. The tribes in their path, long-time allies of the Romans (and scorned by other Celts for this reason), called on the southerners for help. Rome has no love for the Celts, even those it calls its allies, but its political factions agreed that the profitable trade with Celtic Gaul could not be interrupted. Roman troops answered the request. Once invited in, the Romans did not leave Gaul. They utterly smashed the Helvetii, slaughtering or enslaving tens of thousands to such an extent that later historians won't even be sure if the Helvetii were Celts or Germans.



4
Celtic Life

Celts share particular cultural traits that make them Celts. They speak similar languages, take their meals in similar fashion, hold similar values and see the world in essentially the same manner. Like any people, they mostly define themselves by what they are not: German, Roman, or any of the other peoples they have encountered. The food, architecture, habits and play of the Celts make them Celts, and any Celtic character must follow the same path. It is a lifestyle that many later folk will envy, but it carries its share of dangers and rough edges. Not all Celtic ways are admirable.

Architecture

Unlike other peoples, Celts have not established a unique form of architecture. They are not great builders: they see homes, fortifications, and storage buildings in terms of utility. The Celtic world is not noted for the beauty of its human constructions, and they like it that way.

Forts and Homes

There is little difference in the Celtic world between a home and a fortress. A man's house is quite literally his castle. Almost all Celtic homesteads are built with defense against enemies uppermost in the architect's mind. Warriors usually live in fortified homesteads, with the peasants scattered nearby in undefended hovels. These groupings are now beginning to develop into villages, with the fortified keep at the center and homes and craft shops (smiths for the most part, plus a brewer and some other specialists) scattered about them.

Common in Albion, especially in the northern part of the island, are the stone towers called brochs. These structures are round, about 80 feet in diameter, and 40 feet high. Built of dry, fitted stone, they bear an alarming resemblance to the towers of a modern nuclear power plant. The walls are very thick, 15 feet or more at the base, with sleeping chambers and storage space set in hollowed-out chambers within them. In the open space in the middle of the tower stands the water tank and an open hearth for cooking and warmth. Along the top of the tower is a protected path for sentries.

Also very common is the fortified homestead known as a dun, which is a simple stone wall with a single gate protected by a guardhouse. The Celts do not use mortar in their walls, but are highly skilled at fitting dry stone. Their constructions therefore have great strength as long as they are properly maintained (plants will take roots in gaps between the stones, forcing them apart, and freezing water damages the walls as well). Celts are aware of the Roman innovation of lime-based mortar, but use it very rarely.

Within the dun will be a wooden farmhouse with a thatched roof and often a barn as well. There will also be storage for hay, grain, and other items. Sometimes a dun is combined with a broch, to provide two layers of defense. The broch then serves as a primitive form of castle keep. Celts name their homes, giving them titles like Broch Clickhimin or Dun Carloway. A combined dun-and-broch fortress is usually called a dun.

Duns and brochs are normally found in seacoast or mountain regions, where harsh natural features can be worked into the defense plan. An odd feature of Celtic life is that the ruling classes normally live in what most people would consider the least desirable locations because such dwellings are also the most defensible. They are often also the most beautiful, and Celts appreciate the harsh splendor of sea and mountain as this fits their worldview very well. Soft lands – fertile river valleys, for example – are more likely to be the homes of peasants, tilling the land and providing its bounty to their overlords.

A related structure, at least in philosophy, is the crannog. These are very recent innovations, and will become more common in the near future. A crannog is a fortified, artificial island set in a pond, lake, or swamp. A wooden palisade of sharpened logs or a stone wall surrounds it, usually right at the water's edge. This makes storming the small fort almost impossible and peaceful communication nearly so. On the island are the usual buildings found inside a dun: a house, perhaps a barn, and other farm buildings. The crannog is highly inconvenient, though and is usually the seat of a warrior holding firm control over nearby peasants who supply food. It is also a humid and unpleasant place but a nearly impossible one to capture.

Most Celts live in scattered farms and small villages of three or four farmhouses clustered together. Sometimes these are fortified – a cluster of homes surrounded by storage buildings and barns. There are often many of these extra buildings, a half-dozen or more for each house, and large amounts of hay, grain and other food supplies are kept in hand. Animals have their barns as well. The Celtic mind has little patience for a siege. Thus, if the owner can hold out for a few weeks, the attackers will likely give up and go away.

The small fortified village is known as a rath. They are only allowed to exist in areas with a powerful chieftain and relatively weak warriors. Otherwise, local lords do not allow peasants to fortify their holdings in case they choose to resist paying the upper class.

In Europe, Celtic homes are almost always rectangular. In Albion and Ireland, and Celtiberia to a lesser extent, they are round. Rectangular homes are built of a wood frame with a high, peaked roof. The spaces between the structural timbers are then covered over with a screen of thin branches or rushes, which is then coated in mud.

Roofs are thatched, and typically have no openings in them. Smoke from the ever-present fire in the central hearth is allowed to collect under the high roof and slowly leak out of the thatch. Many people hang chunks of meat here, to be preserved by the smoke. Celts disdain the use of furniture, sleeping on rush mats on the ground and sitting on the floor to eat and drink. Some chieftains have long tables in their feasting halls, so that warriors may display the heads of defeated enemies on them. These halls are constructed in the same manner as Celtic

homes but are, of course, much larger. A Celt of higher social standing will also have a table for playing board games; a Celt of very high social standing will have one made of citrus wood.

Round houses are usually built of stone, dry-fitted in the same manner as defensive walls. The outer walls are often covered in moss. The walls are very thick, with chambers inside them used for sleeping or storage. At the center of the building is an open space used as a common area. Roofs are thatched in the same manner as rectangular homes, and these buildings also lack a chimney, allowing smoke from the ever-present central fire to trickle out the rough gaps. Celts appear to prefer the lighter-weight wooden buildings, undertaking the lengthier process of building stone roundhouses in areas where timber is harder to come by.

Mediterranean peoples, used to settled city life for centuries now, put great effort into ostentatious building. Celts do not gain status from the size or beauty of their homes or forts, valuing portable wealth and the displays of potlatches and feasting. Thus, outsiders (especially Romans) often misunderstand the relative wealth of a Celtic society. The buildings usually look very rough, with dried mud covering their exteriors and rough-cut thatch on the roofs. It's not because the Celts can't build better-looking structures but because they just don't care. Their structures are designed for practical application and nothing more. Even stone fortresses, designed to last for generations, have none of the elaborate ornamental fittings of the Greek and Roman world or of Europe's future castles.

Building the City

A larger example of fortress, common in all parts of the Celtic world, is the hill-fort. Like duns and brochs, these occupy naturally strong places like cliffs and hilltops and are sited to take full advantage of nature's defenses. They take in much more ground, often many acres and, in some cases, many hundreds of acres. Inside is a citadel where the chieftain resides and wooden homes for his followers. Animals are also housed and sometimes even pastured inside the walls.

The walls of these forts are often highly sophisticated. Some communities have employed Greek architects and constructed Mediterranean-style mud-brick walls, but these

are unusual. One of the most effective styles uses heavy timbers interlaced together in a square pattern. They are laid horizontally on the ground, and the frame is built upwards on them until the wall is quite high and at least 15 feet thick. The spaces between the timbers are filled with earth and sometimes the stone rubble left over from other construction projects. This makes the wall highly resilient to battering rams – the energy is absorbed by the springy timbers and earth and doesn't damage the wall. To stop enemies from simply setting the wall on fire (and so it will look more impressive), the outer wall is faced with bricks or stone.

Most hill-forts have multiple layers of defense. A set of outerworks usually surrounds the hill-fort, often simply earthen embankments topped with sharpened stakes. These are manned by a watch drawn from young warriors tasked with keeping a lookout for enemies. The outer wall is not really intended to stop an approaching enemy but to prevent surprise attack. While they work their way through the stakes under harassment from the watch, the mass of warriors residing within the hill-fort can be mobilized to man the inner walls or mount a counterattack.

Outside the wall, the inhabitants clear a wide zone without trees or underbrush known as the glacis; what other peoples would call a free-fire zone. Celts don't use many ranged weapons, and so this serves mostly to give the guards early warning of approaching enemies. This zone is usually filled with sharpened stakes to discourage horsemen and chariots. In Albion and Ireland, pyramid-shaped stones about four feet high are placed in a checkerboard fashion, very similar to the "dragon's teeth" tank traps of two millennia hence. These spikes also slow riders and vehicles, forcing the attackers to dismount and come forward on foot. In the tree-poor regions where rot quickly sets in to expensive imported heavy timber, this is a cost-effective alternative.

There is usually a wide, open zone between the walls and the homes or other buildings within the hill-fort. Unlike the glacis, this is usually kept in grass and used as pasture for animals. This is intended to keep enemies out of bowshot of the thatch-and-wood constructions used by the Celts – fire arrows can be devastating. It also provides a place for the defenders to rally and fight invaders in a final, climactic open battle. In a long siege, flocks and herds can be maintained here as well.

Across the Celtic world, hill-forts are slowly being abandoned. For the last generation or so, some of the more powerful tribes have been moving their homes into fortified towns called oppida (singular: oppidum). These are similar to hill-forts in size, but they include mints for striking coins, breweries, craft shops, and open market spaces. They are also located at more convenient spots for trade but continue the Celtic mania for defense. Most are sited at compromise positions: easy access for travelers, but still easy to protect from enemies. There is usually less open ground within their walls than is true for a hill-fort.

Oppida are a sign that the Celtic world is changing. They are a response to a more sophisticated

Losing Hair

Characters who lose their hair are truly unfortunate. They lose some of their social standing and are not as well-respected on the field of battle. A character whose hairline begins to recede loses 1 point of Charisma permanently per year. The maximum loss is 5 points of Charisma, but many warriors would rather die in battle than live with the shame of no hair. Thus, they often seek out a fight where they are hopelessly overmatched so that they can die gloriously.

Druids, who shave their heads in devotion to their craft, do not suffer this Charisma loss since their sacrifice is honorable. Those who are tonsured by the Romans, lose 3 points of Charisma.

economy. Where hill-forts existed to gather in the produce of the surrounding lands, oppida are built on trade. More and more, a common Celt can make a living outside of farm work: rich agricultural production allows the Celts to support ever-larger numbers of specialists.

The tribe is still the center of the oppida. This is not quite the same thing as a city; it is more like a permanent campsite. Chieftains still rule, and outsiders are not welcome to settle in the oppidum. Careful planning often goes into building the oppida, with streets carefully lined out and building sites assigned. People live in sectors designated for their clan and family by the tribal government (the chieftain and his officials). While the defenses are formidable, the inhabitants do not necessarily regard oppida as permanent; every so often, the tribe will abandon these centers and build a new one.

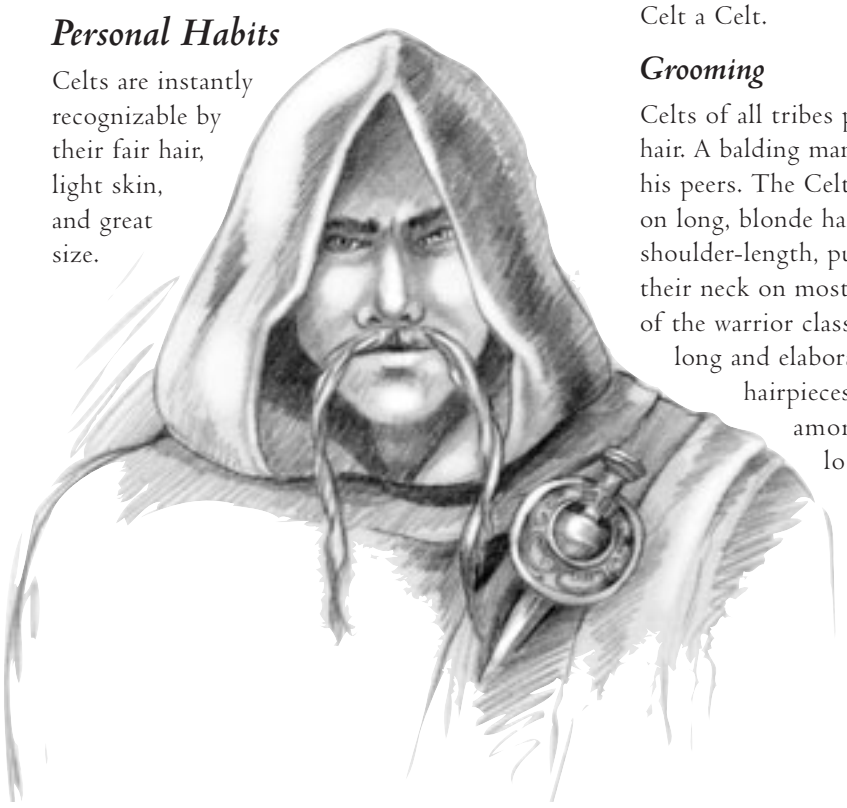
The Well-Groomed Warrior

It is extremely important for a warrior to make certain he is properly "dressed" for battle. Celtic males paint their bodies and stiffen their hair into frightening shapes. Those who do not are clearly inferior. Male warriors who fail to properly prepare for battle suffer a -1 Circumstance Penalty to both their attack rolls and their Armor Classes.

Females do not typically stiffen their hair or paint themselves. They like to differentiate themselves from men since they are rarer. Thus, a woman with long, flowing hair charging into battle is frightening sight. They are expected to fight naked like the men, though. A woman that does not is clearly more concerned with her modesty than with battle and has no place in war. Women who do not fight naked suffer the -1 Circumstance Penalty to attack rolls and AC.

Personal Habits

Celts are instantly recognizable by their fair hair, light skin, and great size.



But there are other cultural traits that make a Celt a Celt.

Grooming

Celts of all tribes put great importance on good hair. A balding man quickly loses the respect of his peers. The Celtic standard of beauty centers on long, blonde hair. Men wear their hair shoulder-length, pulling it back in a tie behind their neck on most occasions. Most Celtic men of the warrior class shave their beards but wear long and elaborate mustaches. Wigs and hairpieces, however, are unknown among the Celts – a warrior losing his hair will often seek glorious death in battle rather than live on with a receding hairline.

Gray hair is less of a social problem (in part, because few people live long enough to acquire much of it). Prematurely gray hair on a warrior still retaining

battlefield prowess, or a woman with her beauty still intact, can be fixed easily with hair colorings. The Celts are quite expert in hair care, as befits such an obsession.

Lacking honor, peasants and slaves may not take on aristocratic airs. They are expected to crop their hair short and to wear cowls and hoods to cover it. Men must shave their faces as well and may not wear beards or mustaches. Peasants and slaves of either gender are not fit to wear jewelry.

One of the most horrifying aspects of falling into Roman hands is the tonsure. Romans force male slaves to shave the top of their heads, leaving only a narrow ring around the head. This mockery of male-pattern baldness is considered unmanning by the Celts. Some would rather die than wear it.

Male druids, however, symbolize the sacrifice of their status by shaving the front half of their head. They usually wear the back half fairly short. This makes them instantly recognizable and emphasizes their special status in society.

A warrior must go into battle well-groomed. Battles have a ritualistic air in part because of the time consumed in preparing the participants. The hair is stiffened with lime and arranged in patterns designed to terrify enemies. Celts almost never wear helmets in battle since this would spoil the elaborate coiffure.

Women also wear their hair long, usually in two plaits. However, on special occasions it can be styled quite elaborately. A woman's hair often cascades halfway down her back or more. Celtic women enjoy decorating their hair with combs and other small pieces of jewelry. Though female Celtic warriors are unusual, in battle they wear their hair like other women: long, flowing, and decorated with jewelry. But for both men and women, it is considered unlucky to comb one's hair after dark.

Both men and women dye their hair, using lime wash to achieve a blonder look. They clean it regularly, and unlike the Romans or Germans use soap and water to keep their bodies clean. Soap is a Celtic invention, made by boiling together animal fat and wood ashes and then straining it and forming it into cakes. Non-Celts value soap they take in trade or by looting Celtic villages: Romans use it to clean their clothing, Germans eat it.

Celts also keep stale urine handy in small clay jars, which they use to clean their teeth. No well-mannered Celt wants to be without this item. It is supposed to freshen one's breath, and its use is a sign of sophistication.

Clothing

Contact with the Scythians and other horse-centered cultures brought the Celts the notion of wearing trousers. Far more useful on horseback than the togas, skirts, or robes of the Mediterranean world, Celtic men adopted them for everyday wear as well. Use differs from place to place – on the continent, chieftains wear trousers while the lower classes do so more rarely. In Ireland, this relationship is reversed, with servants clad in trousers and their betters in robes. Tight trousers are preferred for riding, with a looser version for other occasions. The length varies from tribe to tribe, sometimes down to the ankle, sometimes only to the knee.

Over the trousers, men wear long tunics, usually stretching to the knees. In Gaul, the tunic often has short sleeves and is slit about halfway up the sides. In most other places it is sleeveless, and has no slits. Trousers and tunics are made of linen. Celtic weaving is very advanced, and is considered a proper task for women of the elite classes (one of the few examples of these people doing real work). It is considered a mark of high favor for a young woman to present a man with a garment she wove herself.

The tunic is covered with a heavy woolen cloak known as a *sagi*. A brooch, usually elaborate and ornamental, fastens the cloak over the wearer's upper chest. The *sagi* has a deep hood, often pulled up. While this protects the wearer from the rains of northern Europe, it also effectively hides his or her face from casual observation. The *sagi* is dyed, often green or another solid but bright color, and it is a highly desired trade item. Greeks and Romans like these cloaks, and ownership of one is a status symbol in the Mediterranean world.

A number of men also wear girdles under their

tunics to give them a shapelier appearance and avoid the ridicule that comes from obesity. If they are found out, it is extremely embarrassing and the revelation will utterly destroy their social standing. Outside their cloak or tunic, Celtic men wear decorative belts as well.

For warfare, horseback riding, hunting, and other active occupations, Celts often don a tight-fitting leather jerkin – a small, shirt-like garment with no sleeves. This allows them to keep the warmth of their garments, without them billowing out and interfering with the wearer's activities.

Obesity and Status

Being fat is an unforgivable sin in Celtic society. Thus, characters who become overweight are penalized Status Levels. For every 25 pounds overweight the character is, he or she loses one Status Level. A girdle can hide 25 pounds of fat and make it look like muscle, but a character who is caught wearing one also loses Status. In many ways this is worse: the character took the easy way out instead of working to stay trim.

Women wear similar clothing, though rarely do they don trousers. They wear tunics, often embroidered on the chest and sleeves. A woman's tunic is usually longer than a man's, often stretching to the ground to compensate for the lack of trousers. It is also taken in at the waist to give more indication of the figure underneath. Turning up the hem of the tunic/dress, however, is a sign of poor breeding, a stigma of the peasant class.

In cold or rainy weather, like men, women wear woolen cloaks over their tunics. As with men, the cloak is usually hooded, but Celts of both sexes like to push back the hood to show off their hair; the rain or cold has to be severe for them to cover their heads.

Close to the skin, men and women of the upper classes also wear soft flannel undergarments. These provide warmth, and keep scratchy fabrics off the skin. The working classes, of course, deserve no such consideration. They wear nothing under their rough outer garb.

Both sexes use similar footwear: leather shoes and sandals, linen slippers with leather soles, and sometimes wooden sandals copied from the Greeks and Romans. Celtic shoes are low-slung on the foot; boots are known but not popular.

Celtic warriors make use of body paint when they go into battle, a practice much more common in Britain than on the continent. Britons paint themselves blue, using clays rich in azurite (and, like the Romans with their lead plumbing and wine stoppers, unknowingly poisoning themselves in the process). Woad, a plant-derived dye that does far less harm to the human body, will not come into use until about 400 AD.

The Celtic Body

There is nothing more hideous to the Celtic eye than a fat person. A man who becomes fat can count on losing his social standing even faster than if he had lost his hair. Celts find fat people sexually repulsive, and a spouse becoming grossly fat is grounds for immediate, unquestioned divorce.

Celts have a pretty good idea what causes this: eating too much. And the rich Celtic diet provides one of this period's few opportunities for widespread obesity. Celts have no patience with those who claim they cannot help themselves. They shun the overweight. Families will disown sons and daughters with oversized waistbands. Very few fat children survive to become fat adults.

The ideal male body, according to Celtic thought, is tall and very muscular, with a narrow waist and wide shoulders. Muscles should be well-defined, and there should be little to no visible body fat. Celts equate size with strength. A small man with speed and skill may have great success in battle, but these victories will often be passed off as the result of luck. A physically small warrior has to be

twice as good as his or her rivals to gain the same status.

While fat women are shunned, neither do Celts approve of a thin and wasted look. Female beauty standards call for a tall body, with full hips, clearly defined waist and large breasts. Women are not expected to have the same muscle definition as men, but then they rarely seek excuses to go about topless in public as will a well-made young man. Pale skin is also held to be very beautiful in a woman; freckles (common among Celts) are considered a blemish.

Exercise, however, is not connected to the ideal body in Celtic thought. The gods favor men and women with beauty; a warrior trains for battle, and develops big muscles because the gods admire his prowess with the sword, not because of the thousands of hours spent swinging it in practice. Celtic life provides lots of rigorous exercise, however, even for the perpetually drunken warrior class. The Celts are no nation of couch potatoes. If one wants the perfect body, he or she should eat less bread, drink more milk, and honor the gods with lots of hours on the practice ground with sword and spear.

Food

> ***Four men tended the cooking amongst the Fianna,***
> ***One of them was Finn himself.***
> **— The Yellow Book of Lecan**

Celts enjoy feasting, seeing their holidays as occasions for great bouts of eating and drinking. All of the Greek and Roman commentators mention the Celts' immense appetite for alcohol, which also figures prominently in their legends.

Rome exports vast quantities of wine to the Celtic world. Caravans of wagons and fleets of river boats trundle northward bearing the precious drink. Unlike the Mediterranean peoples, the Celts do not cut this with water but rather drink it undiluted. Wine of this era is not like the fine golden or red liquids of the 21st Century. It is thick and somewhat viscous, a heavier and much sweeter version of modern Shiraz rather than a smooth-flowing table wine. Greeks and Romans consider it unpleasant to drink straight from the jar.

Celts don't seem to mind, which draws sneers from their more sophisticated neighbors. Where the Mediterranean world transports wine in large clay jars called amphorae (singular: amphora), Celts have introduced the Romans to one of their own inventions, the wooden barrel. Romans are a conservative lot, and insist that wine is best kept in clay jars stoppered with lead. Though their medicine cannot recognize it, many Romans suffer from lead poisoning brought on by this practice. Transferring their wine into barrels and casks has helped protect Celtic health, though they have no inkling of this fact.

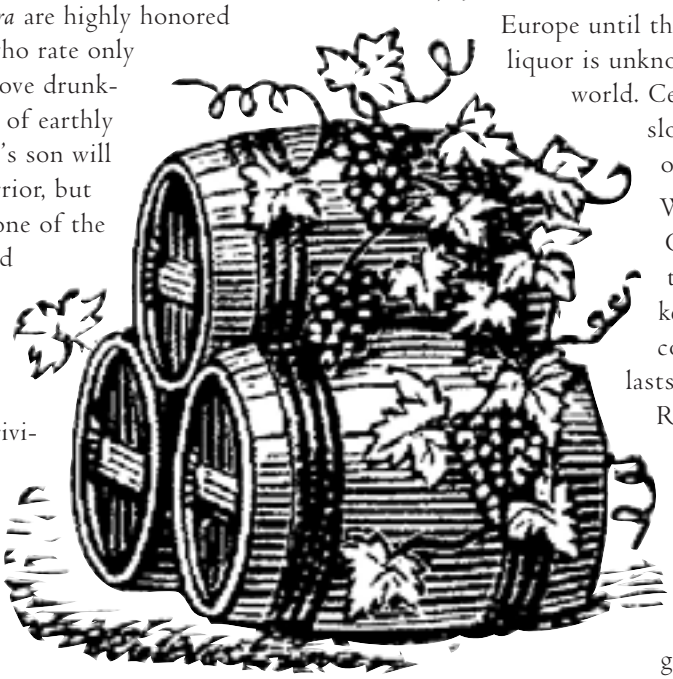
Wine abuse is already recognized as a problem, and some Celtic tribes have banned its import. Heavy drinkers have found they can get profoundly drunk much faster with unwatered wine than on the traditional Celtic ales. Where ale is quaffed for fellowship, many wine drinkers guzzle simply to get drunk. An alarming number of Celtic wine drinkers don't even like the taste and add honey to mask it.

The social problems brought on by increasing drunkenness trouble some of the tribal leaders, who suspect the Romans may be using the drink to undermine the fabric of Celtic society. There is no such broad design in Roman actions; they simply seek profit. That doesn't make the damage any less real, though. Many proud warriors have been reduced to hapless drunkards, poisoning the joy of life for all around them and reducing their tribe's military potential.

More common than wine is ale, usually brewed from barley. The barley is soaked in water for several days, then piled into heaps and allowed to sprout. When the sprouts are about three-quarters of the length of the kernel, they are dried in a kiln. The sprouts are removed, and the malt, as the barley is now called, is ground up. As malt, it can be stored for some time. Ground malt is mixed with water, mashed, strained, and fermented to make the ale.

The ale is heavier than that of the 21st Century, with a lot of sediment. It looks a lot like a wheat beer, with a bitter taste. Drinkers often add honey to soften this edge. It's usually fairly light in color. While Celtic brewers are well aware that roasting the malt will produce a darker brew (dark beers and ales have no more alcohol than their lighter cousins), Celts do not use drinking glasses, so there is little point in cosmetic touches. Celtic ale has a somewhat higher alcohol content than modern beers, but this aspect is inconsistent from batch to batch. Its alcoholic content is noticeably lower than that of wine. Ale is stored for a short period in casks and barrels, but it goes bad much faster than wine in this age before Louis Pasteur. Like modern beer, ale is best consumed fresh.

Celts make their ale at home, but a professional class of brewers (called *cerbsira*) also provides the drink – part-timers can't possibly provide alcoholic beverages in the quantities demanded by the Celts. *Cerbsira* are highly honored among the Celts, who rate only fighting and sex above drunkenness on the scale of earthly pleasures. A brewer's son will never become a warrior, but making ale well is one of the few paths of upward social mobility in Celtic society. Brewers guard their secrets, hoping to pass their privileged status on to their sons.



The finest creation of the *cerbsira* is the drink known as Heather Ale, the "Brew of Kings." Just how it is made is a fiercely guarded secret that will become lost to later times; the last Celtic brewer with the recipe threw himself off a cliff in 1411 AD rather than tell the hated English how to make it and thus gain the wisdom of the Celts. This drink is only made rarely, and then only for kings, tribal chieftains, learned scholars, and senior fili. Drinking it is said to bring visions of the future and other insights that would drive a lesser intellect truly mad.

Romans also acknowledge the superiority of the Celtic brewmaster and will drink Celtic ale when available while scorning the pitiful brews of Italy (even worse now than they will be in the future). Along with ale, *cerbsira* also make mead from fermented honey. The mead is usually strained, so that it has a clear, golden look to it. Its alcohol content is considerably higher than ale, and, as such, it has a semi-religious significance associated with the goddess-queen Ma'eve, "she who intoxicates." While anyone can drink ale, only the elite are allowed mead. Commoners holding back honey from their betters face beatings or even death.

Though several 21st-Century Celtic-derived cultures will be noted for their whiskey, the Irish Annals do not record this drink before 1405 AD. Distillation will not come to Europe until the 1100's. Hard liquor is unknown in the Celtic world. Celts have to get drunk slowly with vast intake of fluids.

Where ale fails the Celtic drinker is in travel; it does not keep more than a couple of days. Wine lasts far longer, and Romans drink it long after it has soured. Many Romans, veteran soldiers in particular, actually prefer it after it has turned to vinegar. By mixing it with water, they greatly reduce the risk of contracting water-borne sicknesses, especially dysentery. Ale does not have a high enough alcohol content to use in this fashion. Celts do not use wine for health reasons; they are quite blunt about seeking intoxication.

Celts do not have drinking establishments, like

the Romans with their *taverna.* This would be bad form, isolating the social aspect of alcohol from the family, clan, and tribe. Instead they drink at meals, gathered in their homes, or around a bonfire. Festivals are also prime excuses for drinking bouts, and the Celts have lots of festivals.

Servants cook the food of the elite; in homes of mid-range warriors, cooking is done by both men and women. It is considered honorable for men to cook meat, especially that of an animal they slew themselves in a hunt. Meals are shared by the adults of the family – men and women eating and drinking together seated in a circle. Among the elite, pride of place goes to the foremost warrior, with the host or head of the family (depending on the nature of the gathering) seated on his or her right. A proper meal is built around meat, huge portions of meat. Celts eat with their fingers, washing after each course. A large piece of meat is hefted and bitten to reduce it to manageable size, and all those present have a small knife they use to remove pieces not easily gnawed off with teeth. It is considered rude to talk while eating, and doubly so to do so while chewing food. There will be plenty of time for talk and song during the hours of drinking that come before and after food is served.

Romans, those lovers of bread and wine, consider eating meat a hardship. Roman armies bring herds of cattle with them to provide beef on the hoof, but the troops sometimes mutiny if denied their normal bread ration. Celts see things in complete reverse, adoring beef and pork. They roast the meat on spits, with the greatest warrior receiving the choicest portions. Meat is also boiled, but rarely combined with other foods into soups or stews. Gnawing on a piece of meat calls up ancient memories of the hunt, and Celts don't try to disguise that they are eating the flesh of animals.

Also in sharp contrast to the Romans, the Celts enjoy dairy products. Celts of all ages drink milk, and their farmers make butter and cheese as well. Milk is a warrior's drink, and Celts believe it lends great strength and stamina. If one could only get intoxicated by it, it would be the perfect food.

Alongside their meat, Celts like small loaves of bread. They also eat this bread dried and pounded into porridge for their morning meal. The bread is sometimes baked with honey, and Celts much prefer their bread relatively fresh. Their grain of choice is wheat, and Celts grow the einkorn (single kernel) variety as well as spelt. These have an earthier taste and make coarser flour than the semolina variety that will take over human tables by the 19th Century. Celts grind their grain in two-stone mills, a procedure the Romans will eagerly copy, and leave the husks in their flour to produce a dark brown, fiber-rich bread. They are aware of bread-derived beers, which are common in the Middle East, but these drinks are not seen often in Celtic lands since ales are preferred for their stiffer alcoholic content.

Fruit and vegetables are usually consumed at other meals. Celts believe that their gods gain much strength from eating special berries, and so they are always on the lookout for berries. One never knows when the next blackberry

might grant special powers. Peas and beans are grown widely because they can be dried and stored for long periods.

All of this bounty, of course, is the province of the warrior and druid classes. The typical working Celt sees meat only rarely and milk only somewhat more often. Their diet instead features lots of porridge sometimes flavored by fruits and vegetables.

Play Time

Celts of all ages greatly enjoy board games, matching their wits in a contest of strategy. Board games are a warrior's pursuit, and give great insight into battle tactics as well as sharpening the mind. Druids, bards and fili play them relentlessly as well because they understand that the play of a good board game helps reveal the underlying fabric of reality. They play in all circumstances, but usually on small tables built and kept specifically for the purpose. Indoors or out, alone or with spectators, the Celts play their games. A finely-made board game is a prized possession (and, like a great many other things in the life of a Celt, a status symbol). Game boards are made of carved wood or stone, and pieces of polished stone, seal bone, or wood.

Winning at board games cannot give one status of itself, but it can greatly enhance that of a successful warrior. By winning at the table as well as on the battlefield, a warrior is shown to have a mind as sharp as her sword.

Celts also like to play field games – running races to see who is the fastest and throwing objects (spears, rocks, giant logs) to see who is the strongest. They enjoy the game known as hurley.

Fidchell

Literally "wood sense," fidchell is the most popular Celtic board game. The exact specifications vary by region, but it is played on a square grid of anywhere from 7 to 19 spaces on a side, laid out like a modern chessboard but always with an odd number of spaces on each side. The game appears to play best on a board with 11 squares on a side. The center square and the corners are all colored; these are important to play.

The "defender" has a king and twelve "princes" (sometimes called "guards"). The king is placed on the center square, with the princes in each adjacent square (including those diagonally adjacent) plus one more in each square adjacent to those that are in turn directly adjacent to the center square.

The "attacker" has 24 pieces, usually called "warriors." Three warriors are placed at the center of each edge, in squares along the side of the board. Three more are placed one square closer to the center, in squares adjacent to those containing warriors.

The defender moves first, and play then proceeds with each player alternating and moving one piece. A player may not "pass." All pieces have the same movement ability: they can go any number of spaces along a row in either direction, but may not move diagonally or change direction in the same move (just like a rook in chess). A piece may not enter a square occupied by an enemy piece. The object of the game is to move the king into one of the corner squares.

A prince or warrior is captured if the opponent moves one piece on either side it. A prince or warrior may move into such a square itself;

Winning at Board Games

A character who wins at a board game gains 1 point of Status, so long as someone is there to witness the victory. Defeating multiple opponents in a single night's play is worth 2 additional Status Points. The warrior who can demonstrate his or her cunning by winning strategy games is as well-respected as one who dominates a battle. The character who can do both is doubly revered.

it is only captured during the opponent's move, if the opponent moves a piece into capturing position. The king is only captured (and the game ends in victory for the attacker) if warriors trap it from all four adjacent squares.

Brandub

Brandub, or "Black Raven," is very similar to fidchell, played on a field of 49 squares (7 by 7). These are colored in checkerboard fashion, usually black and white. The center, or home, square is always black.

The defender starts with one king, placed in the center square, and four princes placed in the squares adjacent to the center. The attacker has eight warriors, placed in the squares adjacent to the corners.

The attacker moves first. All pieces may move one square in any direction; all but the king may move diagonally two squares if they only enter white squares. Only the king may enter the center ("Home") square. An opposing piece is captured by entering its square (as in modern chess). The object of the game is to capture all of the opponent's pieces except for the king, which may not be captured.

Hurley

This is an ancestor of the game that will one day be called "field hockey." Two teams of players, usually from different clans or tribes, square off on a grass field about 100 yards long and 60 yards wide. At either end, a pair of goalposts are erected, which are about seven feet high and 12 feet apart with a pole mounted along the top between them.

Each player has a stick about three feet long with a curved end. A small ball (about 10 inches in diameter) made of leather is placed at the center of the field and two players "face off" to start play and after each goal. The object of the game is to knock the ball through the goal posts but below the top pole. The ball may not be touched by hands or feet; it may only be moved with the stick. Play continues until one team reaches a set number of goals.

Each team has a goalkeeper, who can use his or her feet to defend the goal and throw his or her body in front of a shot, but hands may not be used. Players are not supposed to use their sticks to hit one another, but of course they do. A lot. Swinging the stick, or using it on another player's face or head is considered out of bounds, but a nice swift shot to the body is considered good hard play.

Players are generally naked, and most young men are eager to play: it is a chance to show off their finely-honed bodies in front of the female population. Women generally play only in female-only games, though some play with the men if they can keep up. In women's games there is generally less hitting going on, though they are still much rougher than what the future will consider "contact sports."

Hurley will remain popular in Ireland for thousands of years, sometimes called "hurling" instead. The French will have the gall to claim they invented it, but this reeks of untruth.

5
Celts at War

A warrior people, Celts fight constantly against their neighbors and against each other. War is a ritual, the place where manhood is proven. Winning and losing is not nearly so important as how one plays the game. To the Celtic mind, war is a good thing, not an evil. Good and evil only come into play in terms of how the war is waged. To show cowardice is evil. To fight well is good. This attitude puts the Celts at a severe disadvantage when facing more organized enemies like the Romans or Greeks and, in earlier times, the Carthaginians.

Drinking and Fighting – A Celtic Tradition

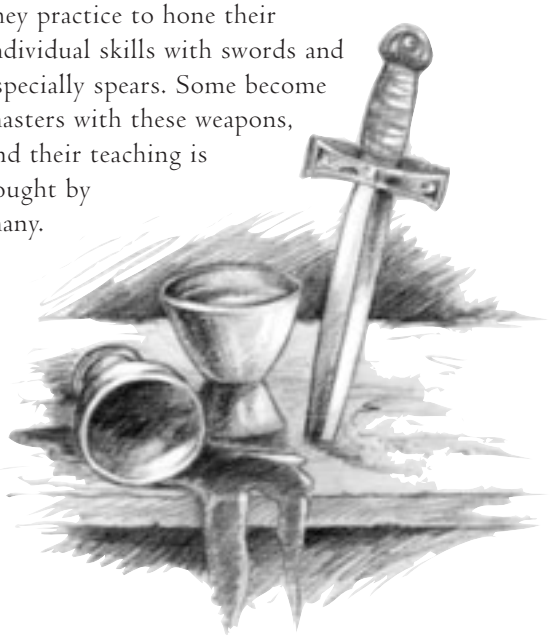
> *A mighty country loves mighty reapers,*
> *Blood is a heavy return for new mead.*
> — **Aneurin,** ***Gododdin,*** **Canto 72**

For the most part, Celts are fighting drunks: too much alcohol almost inevitably leads to violence. Their pride is easily wounded, and, when a Celtic warrior feels slighted, his first reaction is to reach for his weapons. Serving out the choicest portion of meat at a feast can lead to deadly combat if more than one man believes he deserves the first cut.

Celtic feasts sometimes include mock single combat as part of the entertainment. Two warriors fight to the "first touch" or even "first blood." The first combatant who is touched by his foe's weapon or suffers a cut loses. Sometimes the loser concedes gracefully, but other times they continue the fight with greater anger, and it becomes a battle to the death. This is considered an insult to the host (unless, of course, the host is a participant) and other warriors will usually try to calm the situation.

Unlike most peoples, Celts do not esteem these equivalents of 21st Century bar fights much less than they do open battle. A warrior does not need a noble cause in order to fight nobly - while one does not earn honor for fighting under an evil banner, neither does one need an excuse wrapped in goodness and light. Defeating a mighty foe during an apocalyptic struggle to save the world gains no more glory than beating him in a brawl over the best piece of pork on the table. A great warrior will pick a fight during a drinking bout, kill his opponent, and then slice off the defeated foe's head with no less gusto than during battle.

Celts train rigorously for battle, though they spend little time on mass maneuvers. Instead, they practice to hone their individual skills with swords and especially spears. Some become masters with these weapons, and their teaching is sought by many.



Cattle Raids

> *Who calls the Cattle from the House of Tethra?*
>
> *On whom do the Cattle of Tethra smile?*
>
> *Who is the God that fashions enchantments*
>
> *The enchantment of battle and the wind of change?*
>
> **— Great Song of Amairgen the Druid**

These jaunts, celebrated in poetry and song, are another excuse for fighting. Typically, a clan chief will gather a handful of warriors and set out to steal cattle from another tribe. It is considered dishonorable to steal from one's own people.

Taking cattle gains status by itself, so some raiders attempt to sneak away with the animals unnoticed.

However, many of these rustlers drink heavily both before starting out and during the trek to the target herd. By the time they arrive, they are well-soused. The cowherds cannot help but notice them staggering about and shouting wildly, and call their own warriors to assist. Fighting soon breaks out, to the joy of all concerned (except the common-born cowherds, of course, who will be blamed if any cattle are lost but are not allowed to wield the weapons to defend them and who may get randomly slashed or stabbed during the skirmish).

The battle usually devolves into a single combat between the champions of each side, and all are aware of this. The raiders normally bring only one such warrior: the rest are along to watch. If the thieves are defeated, they will flee, and it is expected that onlookers (commoners, women, children) will fling cow dung at them as they run. If the raider wins, his or her comrades grab a few cows and lead them off before another challenge is made.

Cattle hold symbolic value. While it is honorable to steal them, raiders who take pigs would be considered dishonorable common thieves. Successful cattle raiders are expected to slaughter at least one of the beasts on their return and provide a feast for their followers.

Battle

> *Together arise the warriors,*
>
> *Strangers to the country, their deeds shall be heard.*
>
> *There was slaughtering with axes and blades,*
>
> *And there was raising of large cairns over the men of toil.*
>
> **— Aneurin, *Gododdin,* Canto 55**

Celts go to war as clan and tribe. Every fighting man is mobilized for the occasion. There is rarely much argument over the cause of a war. Most Celts simply thank their chieftain or king for manufacturing an excuse for combat. A Celt does not feel the need to find a just cause to spill blood. The gods delight in battle for its own sake, and that should be enough for humanity.

This attitude has made the ongoing cultural struggle with the Romans very difficult for Celtic tribal leaders. Most of these men and women realize that their very existence is at stake, that defeat by the Romans means an end to the Celtic way of life and slavery for the individual Celt. Their warriors view the Romans as just another enemy and will as gladly fight alongside the legions as against them. This provides an opening for bribery and corruption: the Romans have learned that they can apply gold to turn Celt against Celt. The warriors of renegade tribes are not offended to learn that their leaders have turned against their

Celtic brethren. They're just glad to have someone to fight.

While the vast Celtic population lets the tribes field huge armies, they lack the logistical infrastructure to keep them together for long. Despite a generally enthusiastic attitude among the women, children, and elderly, the Celts have no formal organization allowing them to collect supplies (chiefly food), transport them to the army and distribute them with anything approaching efficiency. The huge armies favored by Celtic leaders can't hold together very long before they start to break up as the warriors forage for food. Thus, Celtic armies come together at a pre-announced mustering ground and then seek out a decisive battle as quickly as possible.

When Celtic armies face one another, battle is the climax of a day of ritual shows of strength. The armies make as much noise as they can to show their martial spirit: clashing weapons against shields, shouting, stamping and blowing trumpets. The trumpets are important; the proper Celtic warrior goes to battle wielding a bronze war-trumpet prized almost as much as his sword. All are trying to work themselves into the frenzy of battle. Finally, each side will send forth a champion for single combat.

Neither side is required to send their chief or king forward, although naming someone else can cost a leader his legitimacy. Before swords are crossed, both participants list their virtues, naming enemies slain and feats of valor. They also insult their opponent, belittling the enemy's accomplishments (should they win, of course, these will instead be greatly exaggerated in the re-telling). Powerful warriors and chieftains are accompanied by retainers they call parasites, whose job it is to loudly proclaim their benefactor's prowess before single combat. While the parasite lists the battles won and enemies killed, the hero preens and displays his or her muscles and sword strokes. A few Celts have learned from the Romans the process of oiling their bodies

The Naming of Virtues

Warriors selected to champion their tribes benefit from the special ritual, the Naming of Virtues. Prior to battle, both combatants list their virtues, which include great foes defeated, battles won, and other accomplishments. This helps prepare the character for the fight.

For each virtue the character can name, he or she makes a Perform check at DC 20. Each successful check allows the character to add a +1 Circumstance Bonus to his or her attack rolls or damage rolls (character's choice) during the combat. The character may split these bonuses however he or she likes but must choose how they will be arranged at the start of the duel. Thus, a champion with a +6 bonus from the Naming of Virtues could choose to add +2 to his attack roll and +4 to damage. This bonus applies for every attack during the duel, but it cannot be altered once the duel has begun.

Both participants also take the opportunity to insult and belittle the accomplishments of the other. For each gibe the character makes, his or her opponent must make a Will Saving Throw. The DC is 10 + the insulting character's Perform Skill Ranks + Charisma Bonus. Each missed Saving Throw costs the defender +1 to his or her attack rolls or damage rolls during the duel. The affected character chooses how the penalties will be applied, however, it is possible to enter the duel with penalties if one's opponent has successfully belittled all of one's accomplishments.

Sometimes a chieftain will have a group of "parasites" to do the Naming of Virtues for him while he poses and demonstrates his prowess. In this case, the parasite with the highest Perform Skill Rank (or failing that, the one with the highest Charisma Bonus) makes the check. He or she gets a +1 Circumstance Bonus for every two extra parasites there to help, and the chieftain may add his Charisma Bonus to the roll as well.

to better show off their physique, and this is the point where they put on a show.

The fight is inevitably to the death, with the winner finishing the event by chopping off the loser's head. Surprisingly often, the losing side honors the outcome and withdraws, yielding whatever the war had been fought to determine (usually control of land). This usually depends on how good of a show the combatants gave their comrades: if the other warriors saw an epic struggle worth re-telling over gallons of ale on a winter night, they are usually satisfied and content to go home. If not, they need to shed some blood themselves lest they face a boring winter of the same old war stories.

Against non-Celtic enemies, a Celtic tribe will still issue the challenge without seriously expecting it to be answered. This helps hearten the warriors by showing the enemy's cowardice. German tribes will often send out a champion for the duel, but if their hero loses they will continue the battle anyway. Roman generals have actually responded once or twice, but usually disdain the practice as barbaric. Greeks have never answered the call, and as a result are uniformly despised as enemies. Celts serving as mercenaries in foreign armies often do feel obliged to send out a champion even at the risk of angering their employers.

When Celtic armies do fight, they follow their tribe's war chief in a massive charge against the enemy. Celts will sometimes try to form a shield wall and resist the charge, but the Celtic way of war is to attack. More often, both armies collide head-on. The fight then breaks down into uncountable individual duels. When Celts fight one another, enemies will often lower their weapons and stand aside to watch a particularly well-matched single combat between skilled opponents. When one of these combatants falls, fighting then resumes. These lulls take place all over the battlefield, making it a strange vista of voyeurism.

Ganging up on a single enemy warrior is considered bad form, but eventually the Celts do it anyway. A battle is won when one side gives way, though, more often than not, both armies stagger off the battlefield once they are exhausted. Against another Celtic tribe, winning and losing matters little to the individual warrior, as long as he has a few heads to show for the day's work.

Celts prefer to fight naked, the better to call on nature's power to increase their life force and thus make them more formidable in battle. While they usually carry a shield and a spear, these are cast aside when battle fury takes over. The sword is a man's weapon; the spear is also considered honorable, but it is not coincidental that Celts always refer to their weapons as "sword and spear," and never reverse the order. Women are more likely to fight with spear than sword, though this seems to be a result of smaller body size (less strength to put behind a wide sword swing) rather than an actual gender rule. A large enough female warrior character should be no less likely to fight with a blade than her male counterparts.

Battles are intended to be a series of individual duels, and each such pairing requires a fair amount of space to swing the weapons. This makes the Celtic warrior terribly vulnerable to the Roman legionnaries, who carry a short, stabbing sword called a gladius. The Romans fight in closely-

packed formations and employ tactics designed to force their enemies into similar close quarters. While the Celts struggle fruitlessly for room to use their big weapons, the Romans relentlessly stab them to death, and Celtic casualties in these battles can be enormous. It's not unknown for Celtic dead to number in the thousands and even once or twice into the tens of thousands against mere dozens of Roman casualties. In the open a single Roman soldier is no match for a Celtic warrior. Thus, the Romans make sure that never happens.

The Celts are aware of this problem and try to pick ground for their battles to deny the Romans use of their formations. The obvious solution of cutting down their swords and sharpening the point is unthinkable. A warrior's sword is the steel symbol of his manhood and reducing the size of a phallic representation would be worse than taking a gladius between the ribs. Celts often ridicule Roman soldiers for their tiny swords and their symbolic implications, at least until they see them used in battle.

As Celts see warfare as the ultimate compliment to the gods, they are extremely distressed when they lose against a non-Celtic opponent. The gods may decide to favor another Celtic tribe, but seeing them side with the Romans and their strange foreign gods calls the Celt's entire concept of the universe into question.

Suicide is a typical Celtic response to defeat in such a battle. Romans are also known to take their own lives, by "falling on their swords" - placing the point of the gladius over their heart and pitching forward onto the ground, or running hard into a handy wall or tree. Celtic weapons don't lend themselves easily to such behavior, and so Celts will form suicide pacts in which they slash one another to death with their swords or simultaneously stab one another with their spears or daggers. Female warriors, knowing the fate that awaits them in Roman captivity, are highly likely to kill one another rather than allow themselves to be raped by the legions. The typical fighting woman makes a suicide pact before battle, and carries a dagger for this purpose.

Cutting off Heads

> ***Alas, for the heads without bodies,***
> ***For whom dark tears will be shed.***
> ***It was no folly to fight***
> ***Even if the heads of the Eóghan race fall***
> ***Like leaves in autumn.***
>
> **— Song of Rigbaddan**

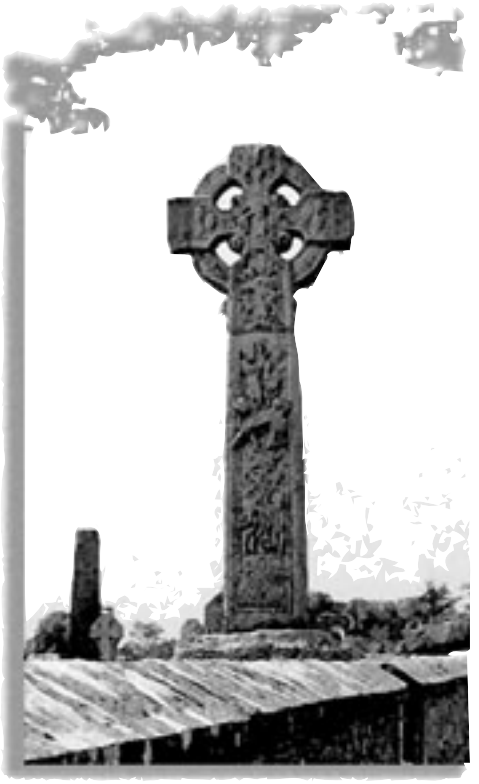
It's not enough for the Celtic warrior to defeat or even kill an enemy in battle: one also needs to take the enemy's head. The head need not be cut off in the course of the fight, and honor is not decreased by slicing off the head after the foe has been killed.

The severed head symbolizes the Celtic religious outlook, and the owners treasure them. Celts believe that the head is the center of human thought, logic, and emotion. It is widely thought that the head can live on without the body, and so proud warriors talk to the heads they take, usually to taunt them.

A freshly-severed head is mounted on a spear and carried before the victor or draped over his horse's neck. The victorious warrior brings the head home and puts it in a place of honor – near the door to his home or perhaps mounted on a wall inside. Celts also dedicate the heads of fallen foes to their gods, decorating temples with them. The owners of the severed heads are very proud of them, and make a ritual of showing them to visitors and detailing the battle which ended the life of the previous owner.

A severed head is a prized possession, for to take someone's head is to symbolically take their power. Owners of severed heads sometimes sell them to others, and for large amounts of money: though the new owner obviously cannot brag of having killed the person to whom it originally belonged, owning a great warrior's head gains one status. The higher the price, the greater the acquired status.

One gains no glory for looting already-severed heads in battle: if someone else has already killed an enemy and chopped off his head, stealing the severed head is no great act. Friends and relatives of the deceased will try to



regain the head and bury it, but on the battlefield one must actually kill the head's original owner and lop it off to gain the glory of taking the fallen warrior's power.

A severed head can ward off evil, much like a talisman, but it is best offered to a god. This increases the god's power by that of the defeated enemy, and also prevents the defeated foe from working against the god in the afterlife. This is especially important when Celts fight non-Celts, like Romans, who refuse to acknowledge the Celtic pantheon and thus obviously are servants of evil. The power of their greatest warriors must be denied to their false gods.

At feasts, the lead warriors place the head of their most noteworthy foe on the table before them, as a reminder to all present of their prowess. This probably doesn't add a whole lot to the taste of the food (although the heads are usually embalmed), but, with enough ale or wine, no one notices after a while. The heads are preserved in cedar oil, or the skulls kept in special niches in temples. Some renowned warriors fashion the skulls of defeated enemies into drinking cups. Druids also do so sometimes with heads donated to temples, using the vessel thus created to increase the power of religious rites. Carved stone heads also have religious significance: they can perform the same function of a real severed head to drive off evil forces, though not nearly as effectively. Unlike a human head, though, they do not rot. Heads are also tossed into sacred bodies of water to honor the deities dwelling therein, another very ancient practice.

Chopping off heads and then worshipping the result, has an ancient lineage. Stone Age peoples revered the severed head, and Celts did so from their earliest times as a distinct culture. The very idea horrifies Greeks and Romans, but will fascinate their descendants millennia from now. Game rules for severing heads and the benefits thereof can be found in Chapter 10.

The Honored Dead

> ***Ere the turf was laid on the gentle face***
> ***Of the generous dead, now undisturbed,***
> ***He was celebrated for fame and generosity.***
> ***This is the grave of Garthwys Hir from the land of Rywoniawg.***
>
> **— Aneurin, *Gododdin,* Canto 53**

To die in glorious combat is the desired end of all Celts, but the spirit still remains within the body. In earlier times, the Celts buried their noble dead in richly-appointed graves, but over the last generation or two they have begun to cremate them. This releases the spirit and allows it to enter the afterlife.

Celtiberians and Britons have a different view: a warrior slain in combat gains entry into the next world if his or her flesh is then consumed by ravens and other scavengers. This releases the spirit from the flesh, and completes the cycle of life. These peoples leave their dead on the battlefield, as this represents the perfect point of departure from the mortal world.

Peasants and slaves, of course, deserve no such consideration: their corpses are disposed of in the quickest and easiest fashion possible.

Particularly cruel Celtic slave-owners are known to simply toss expired slaves onto a nearby dung heap, whether or not they have actually drawn their final breath.

Celts rarely mutilate enemy dead beyond the ritual act of chopping off heads. Once the head is harvested, they have no interest in the rest of the corpse and leave it for the ravens. As the head contains the spirit, the rest of the body is just so much rotting meat to be ignored.

Some Celts hew to an earlier belief that the dead must be returned and buried beneath the door of their home. The ghost will then protect the home from evil spirits. Or, if the family treated the departed poorly in life, he or she will haunt them and punish them for their misdeeds.

Mercenary Service

> ***He enriched his sword with deeds of violence,***
> ***He enriched those who rushed to war,***
> ***And with his arm made pools of blood.***
>
> **— Aneurin, *Gododdin,* Canto 47**

The underdeveloped Celtic economy makes it difficult for a warrior to fight as often as he (or less often, she) would like. Celtic armies have to break up soon after they are mustered, lest the troops starve and the crops be left in the fields untended. This becomes less of a problem for those who draw pay for their military service.

Celtic warriors are very popular in the Mediterranean world. They have served the Greek kingdoms of the East, including Egypt. Many served Carthage in that city's doomed conflict with Rome. Some have even fought for the Romans. They take their payment in gold or, less often, land. But their real reward is the chance to fight in a long-term war with the backing of a sophisticated supply structure.

Individual Celtic mercenaries are extremely rare. Instead, employers hire either an entire tribe or a warrior band (see below). When a tribe is hired, non-combatants trail along behind as well. Such a group can number into the tens of thousands all told.

The mercenary tribe then accompanies the employer's army on campaign, fighting battles as directed. Celts take to foreign discipline surprisingly well, as long as their basic methods are not disturbed. They will at least attempt to stand their ground before charging if ordered to do so, for example. But they will utterly refuse to change their weapons. Foreign employers rarely send Celtic mercenary tribes on independent missions; the Celtic sense of geography leaves much to be desired, and they are known to plunder friend and foe alike.

Payment for service, of course, depends largely on the number of warriors a tribe can provide. Thus, the social pressures forcing many men into peasant status are not as strict when the tribe is accepting gold for its blood. Those whose birth into the warrior class might be questionable, or women, often find the usual barriers falling away.

After the war is completed, there are often misunderstandings about pay rates. Celts typically demand land in exchange for their service, whether this had been agreed ahead of time or not. They also deeply distrust Greeks and Romans on an instinctive level, and usually expect to be cheated. They are rarely disappointed. Service for a foreign ruler is often followed by war against the same ruler, especially if the during the course of the war the Celts learned the weaknesses of their erstwhile allies.

Romans employ large numbers of Celts, especially cavalry. Horsemen are necessary for scouting, to screen the army from an enemy surprise attack, and to support the Roman heavy infantry during battle. But Romans are poor riders, and the state does not choose to bear the tax burden of stud farms, remount centers, and other infrastructure to support professional cavalry units. Instead they hire these from allied peoples, and the best horsemen come from Gaul. These troops stay surprisingly loyal to their paymasters, as few have developed any sort of higher national consciousness.

Celtic Weapons

A Celt is extremely attached to his or her weapon. Consequently, this bond can aid the character in battle. Only Celts may benefit from the abilities below, and only for the chosen weapon.

As he or she gains in level, so too can the character's weapon. The character spends experience on the weapon that would normally go to himself or herself, allowing it to rise in level instead. Only weapons can benefit from this feature. This must be the character's favored weapon. He or she cannot have two such weapons.

Each time a weapon gains a level, it also gains 1 extra point of Hardness and 2 extra Hit Points, making it more resilient and harder for opponents to break in combat. It also gains a Special Feature of the character's choice. Special Features are listed below.

Special Features

+1 AC Bonus
+4 Bonus Against Disarm Checks
Free Critical Hit
Ignore Attack of Opportunity
Quick Draw Feat

Each is explained below:

+1 AC Bonus (Ex): While wielding this weapon, the character gains a +1 Circumstance Bonus to his or her Armor Class. He or she is so familiar with it the character can instinctively use it defensively. If the character loses or switches weapons, the bonus is lost.

+4 Bonus Against Disarm Checks (Ex): Whenever the character is wielding the chosen weapon, and an opponent attempts to disarm him or her, the defender receives a +4 Familiarity Bonus in addition to any other bonuses he or she may receive to the roll to resist the disarmament. The character understands the feel of the weapon so well that it is difficult to take it from him or her.

Weapons

> ***Oh, the size of the expert blue sword***
>
> ***Which is in his valiant right hand!***
>
> ***And the size of his great shield beside it!***
>
> ***The size of his broad green spear!***
>
> ***— The Battle of Moyrá***

The fighting man (and less often, woman) is known by his or her weapons. Celts name their weapons, and deeply dislike fighting with another man's sword. If escaping from Roman captors, for example, a Celtic warrior will pick up a strange blade, but they will never be fully comfortable with it. The sword is the key weapon for a Celt, but others are used as well.

Weapons hold great mystical significance to the Celtic man. On reaching maturity, a boy is acknowledged as an adult by receiving weapons from an authority figure: his father or the clan or tribe chief (the custom varies slightly in different areas). The Celtic warrior often names his weapons, speaks to them, and considers them to hold a spirit within them. Celts believe that a very special warrior can receive an extreme blessing from a god: the deity can choose to inhabit the warrior's weapon at a key moment (more often a sword than a spear) and lend his or her strength to the weapon's blow.

Because a weapon is the reflection of its owner and carries a spiritual bond with him, swords (and less often spears) are sometimes buried alongside their fallen wielder. Symbolizing that no other person can have the same bond, the sword will be ritually bent before being placed in the grave. The Romans, having desecrated graves and found such

damaged weapons, cite this as proof that Celtic metalworking is a backward craft, but this is certainly not true. A true Celtic warrior receives arms made by a smith of the clan. Celts do not loot the battlefield for weapons of the fallen, though they have no problem taking gear off dead Romans or Germans. However, one can never forge a spiritual bond with a dead man's weapon.

Swords

> ***Furious was the stroke of his protecting sword;***
> ***Ashen shafts were scattered from the grasp of his hand.***
> ***From the stony pile;***
> ***He delighted to spread destruction.***
> **— Aneurin, *Gododdin*, Canto 26**

The Celtic warrior carries a long sword of steel or more rarely iron. The best swords come from Britain and Celtibera (the region that will one day be known as Spain), but good steel is found all over the Celtic world. It is often over four feet in length, and longer swords are carried in a scabbard slung over the owner's back and drawn over the right shoulder. Those who wear their sword on their belt always place it on the right side – like the Romans, Celts believe the left side to be unlucky. The Celtic sword is a slashing weapon, and steel in these days before stainless process can carry a razor's edge. A Celtic sword often has a blunt tip, however, since it is not intended for thrusting. Its great weight keeps the wielder from doing so without quickly becoming exhausted, and few have the enormous strength needed to put any force behind a thrust with a sword that large. Slashing is another story; the sword's mass puts great cutting power behind a wide swing, and a well-honed weapon wielded by powerful arms can cut through almost anything. Celtic swords uniformly sport large, heavy pommels (the "knob" at the end of the hilt) to help maximize this force.

The scabbard is an important status symbol for its owner: made of leather or iron, it is decorated with warlike symbols. These usually tell the story of the owner's greatest battles and achievements. They also bear religious icons, calling on divine help for their owner in battle.

Celtic Weapons (cont'd)

Free Critical Hit (Ex): Once per game session, the character can score a Critical Hit for free. Thus, if he or she rolls a Critical Threat in combat, instead of rolling again to determine if the blow was a Critical Hit, the character may choose to use his or her free one and automatically make it critical. The character is under no obligation to use this ability and may choose to roll normally, saving the Free Critical Hit for later. This ability is only usable with the chosen weapon.

Ignore Attack of Opportunity (Ex): Once per game session, when the character would normally provoke an Attack of Opportunity, he or she may choose to disallow it. Thus, if the character, decided to Bull Rush an opponent with his or her chosen weapon, he or she could choose this opportunity to not have to face an Attack of Opportunity, handling the action as though it were an ordinary attack. This ability is only usable with the chosen weapon, with which the character is so familiar that he or she can instinctively deflect the opponent's attack.

Quick Draw Feat (Ex): The character has become so handy with the chosen weapon that he or she gets the Quick Draw Feat for free for the weapon in question.

A character may take any of the above Special Features each time the weapon rises in level with the exception of the Quick Draw Feat. No Special Feature can be taken more than three times, but all effects stack. The maximum level to which a weapon can rise is 5.

Caring for Weapons

Steel can carry a razor's edge but loses it quickly. It also rusts at the slightest dampness. Therefore, the good warrior cares for his or her weapons regularly. To let others see a rusty sword is to invite terrible shame.

A sword must be cleaned once it is blooded. And it must be sharpened (with a sharpening stone) by shaving firmly and slowly along the cutting edge at least 100 strokes on each side (four times total for a two-edged sword like most Celtic weapons). The blade must also be oiled every day, using refined petroleum or plant oils.

Characters must take time to care for their weapons. After a battle, the weapon must be cleaned or it suffers a -1 Circumstance Penalty to all damage rolls. Additionally, after every three battles in which a character participates, it must be sharpened. Dull weapons inflict only half damage. A Celtiberian blade need only be sharpened once every five battles, owing to the superior metallurgy of that region.

Finally, if the blade is not oiled every day, it begins to rust. This process is accelerated by not cleaning and sharpening. A weapon loses one point of Hardness each day it is not oiled. It loses an additional point if it is not cleaned. Weapons whose Hardness is reduced to 0 are completely rusted over and useless as anything but flimsy clubs. Any character caught wielding a dirty, dull, or rusty weapon suffers a -2 Penalty to all Charisma-based checks for 2d10 weeks.

A warrior without a special scabbard is scorned and mocked; any who gain prominence in battle will quickly commission a fine craftsman to make a scabbard for his or her weapon.

Celtic warriors also like to stamp designs into the blade itself. This is done by a master craftsman, not by the owner, and usually at the time the blade is forged (so as not to ruin its fine qualities by re-heating). Thus, they rarely tell the story of the warrior who owns the blade (as the designs had to be put in place before he or she accomplished anything with it) but more general echoes of the tribe's great deeds or those of its gods and heroes.

Celtiberians prefer a shorter sword than their northern cousins, the product of much greater contact with the Greek and Roman worlds over the centuries. They understand the need for close blade-work when fighting the Romans. Somewhat balancing their sword's shorter length is their superior metallurgy; according to the Greek writer Diodorus, "the iron of their two-edged swords ... is capable of cutting anything." Celtiberian smiths know to work carbon into their iron to make steel, which is much tougher than iron and will hold a keen edge.

Spears

> ***Small the esteem of any spear with Pisear;***
>
> ***His foes are already broken.***
>
> ***No worries for Pisear;***
>
> ***As it is others who suffer wounds.***
>
> ***— The Fate of the Sons of Tuireann***

In addition to a sword, a warrior carries several spears. A thrusting spear is wielded when the clan's warriors stand shoulder-to-shoulder to repel enemy cavalry or to counter Greek-style phalanxes. The sword is kept sheathed, and both hands are used on the spear. Every other man on the front row uses both hands on his shield, to protect his mates to either side and behind him.

Celts don't train to maneuver in these formations, however. Like their German neighbors, they have some ritual moves they can make in unison. But chiefly, they either stand their ground behind the shield-wall or charge madly at the enemy.

The thrusting spear usually has a very sharp point and is barbed or notched to do maximum

damage to soft human flesh. The point is up to two feet long, and, in the hands of a skilled warrior, it can be used much like a sword (though the spear shaft gets in the way in close quarters). For longer-range combat, Celts depend on the throwing spear. The throwing spear is purpose-made, with a lighter head and shorter shaft. It's not clear whether the Romans copied their pila (throwing javelins) from the Celtic throwing spear or if the Celts are imitating the pilum. Some Celts become very good with the throwing spear since this is also the preferred way to hunt game. Celts are rarely known to throw them in volleys as do the Romans, and this greatly limits their effectiveness in battle. Hurling spears in unison would make it difficult to tell whose weapon had felled a great enemy warrior, and there is no purpose in going to war if one receives no credit for his or her great deeds. Celtic warriors understand the advantage Romans gain by throwing their pila in unison; they simply choose not to copy this tactic. Celts throw overhand for the most part, and in a flat trajectory. This gives them greater accuracy but less range than a Roman hurling his javelin in a high curve. Special rules for Celtic versus Roman spears can be found in Chapter 9.

Daggers

"This is my love,' said white Queen Hynde,
"And this, and this, and this."
Four times she stabbed him to the heart
while she his lips did kiss.

— The Tryst of Queen Hynde
Fionna Macleod

Daggers have become a popular answer to the Roman short stabbing sword, and many warriors carry these as well. Daggers are for close-quarters work and are not considered as honorable as the sword or spear. They are made of iron or steel, with a broad blade. Celts rarely use these to fight two-handed. Instead the dagger is used together with a shield or kept sheathed until needed in an emergency. If a Roman gets inside a Celt's guard, the Celtic warrior will try to use his or her dagger, but this is very difficult to achieve in practice.

Scabbards

A scabbard is a symbol of the warrior's accomplishments. To have one with little decoration is shameful, and so is having one that is below one's standards. Warriors are expected to commission a good scabbard as quickly as they can afford one. Those who do not receive a -4 Shame Penalty to all Charisma-based checks and are mocked by their comrades until they do.

Scabbards come in four varieties, based on price. The types and their costs are listed below:

Scabbard	Cost in Gold
Passable	50
Nice	200
Fancy	500
Impressive	1000

The scabbard must also be commensurate with the character's accomplishments. Thus, one can't get by with a cheaper class to save money. The minimum type of scabbard per character level is listed below. A character with a scabbard below the one commensurate with his or her Level receives the usual -4 penalty.

Minimum Scabbard Type*	Level
Passable	3
Nice	7
Fancy	10
Impressive	15

* - Being a chief increases the minimum scabbard the character must have by one rank, regardless of the character's actual level.

Bows and Slings

Some Celts carry light bows into battle, but such practice is unusual. While their Welsh descendants will become known for their powerful longbow, Celtic warriors see the bow and arrow as something used to bring down birds and squirrels. It is not a warrior's weapon; some Celtic dialects have no words for "bow" or "arrow," and they are rarely named in authentic Celtic poetry. Roman armies have brought the Celts into contact with the mercenary Rhodian and Cretan light infantrymen who serve alongside the Romans and the favored weapon of these islanders, the sling.

Rhodians start training with the sling at a very early age. Though it is simple to learn its use, actual mastery requires long practice and careful training. A Rhodian can snap his sling with explosive force, flinging the bullet at deadly velocity. These men bake their own sling bullets, shaping clay into the exact form they desire for top performance and usually etching obscenities into the projectile. The lead sling bullet of fantasy games is unknown in the real world: lead is very heavy (only gold is heavier, in the knowledge of these times), but also very soft. Romans use lead for water pipes and to stopper wine jugs, but like any metal of this era it is expensive to mine and refine. Throwing such an expensive item at an enemy would be laughed off as the act of a lunatic.

Rhodians are very, very rarely found serving Celtic leaders as mercenaries. They do not care who pays them, as long as the wage is good. However, they prefer to fight in very lightweight gear (a simple leather harness, usually) and so dislike the climate. And they do not like the Celtic diet. The wine, olives, and bread call to them, and they would sooner get back to the warm Mediterranean shores.

Most Celtic slingers are natives. Celts consider the sling a child's toy, and give little heed to its use. They sometimes hunt birds with them, but this is considered a childish game. Slings are used in siege operations, to cover storming parties attacking fortifications by keeping the garrison's heads down. Likewise, the garrisons of Celtic hill forts use slings to attack approaching enemies, but these are unusual situations, and the slingers simply pick up rocks, wrap them in the sling and hurl them. Very careful garrisons will collect stones of roughly the right size and shape, but all Celts consider baking special sling bullets a silly and unmanly act.

Chariots

Celts are also known for their use of the war chariot, a weapon abandoned by other peoples centuries ago when riding horses became available. The Celtic chariot is a low-slung vehicle with iron-rimmed wheels. A small platform is rigged over the axle; Celtic chariots lack the high gunwales common in chariots of the early Middle East.

A team of three men or women rides the chariot into battle: a warrior, his or her shield-bearer, and the driver. The warrior is one of the tribe's elite because few can afford the expensive war machine. He or she selects the driver and shield-bearer from the tribe's lower classes; drivers are skilled specialists in high demand. Slaves are never used in these roles, but the position is practically the only means of upward social mobility within a Celtic tribe. As a result, competition for these posts is fierce. A successful and honored driver or shield-bearer will never be fully accepted by warriors – when the Celtic Queen Cartimandua sought to mortally insult her husband, she slept with his shield-bearer – but their children might be brought up as minor aristocrats.

In battle, the charioteer directs the vehicle straight at the enemy in a headlong charge. Celtic chariots rarely have scythed wheels like earlier chariot-riding peoples used. The warrior throws heavy wooden darts, called grosphus. These are about four feet long, but a skilled warrior can throw them with some force. The shield-bearer uses his or her heavy wooden device to protect the warrior and driver from the enemy's darts, and loyal shield-bearers have been known to throw their body in front of a dart to save their master's life. After the darts have been thrown, the charioteer brings the vehicle to a halt. The warrior draws his or her

sword and descends to meet other warriors on foot, preferably in single combat. The charioteer then moves off but stays within sight of the warrior and comes to retrieve him or her if the center of the action moves elsewhere on the battlefield.

The Celts breed special shaggy ponies to pull their war chariots, descendants of which will be well-known 2,000 years later. Throwing darts at ponies is considered very bad form and violates both honor and taboos against harming animals. Inevitably, though, the animals suffer in battle.

The Celtic chariot is, therefore, not a weapon in the sense of earlier versions. It is used to give the warrior high-speed mobility on the battlefield, and thus is especially useful for Celtic leaders. Their hands and attention are not diverted to controlling a horse.

Chariots are common in Britannia and Galatia, but much less so on the continent. They are completely unknown among the Celtiberians and the Irish. It is a relic of an earlier age, when horses had not been bred yet to a size capable of bearing a man's weight.

Protection

> ***From the banquet of wine and mead***
> ***They went to the strife***
> ***Of mail-clad warriors: I know no tale of slaughter which accords***
> ***So complete a destruction as has happened.***
>
> **— Aneurin, *Gododdin,* Canto 69**

Many Celts of this period disdain armor as a coward's dress. As with weapons and tactics, they are not blind to the advantages gained by their enemies in using such protection. They simply choose not to take advantage of metal rings or plate. Since honorable combat is performed one-on-one, a warrior shouldn't need armor anyway; it is most useful in deflecting impersonal ranged weapons like arrows and throwing spears. It won't save one from a heavy blow from a sword, even if the blade does not pierce the flesh, since the blunt-force trauma will do grievous damage all by itself.

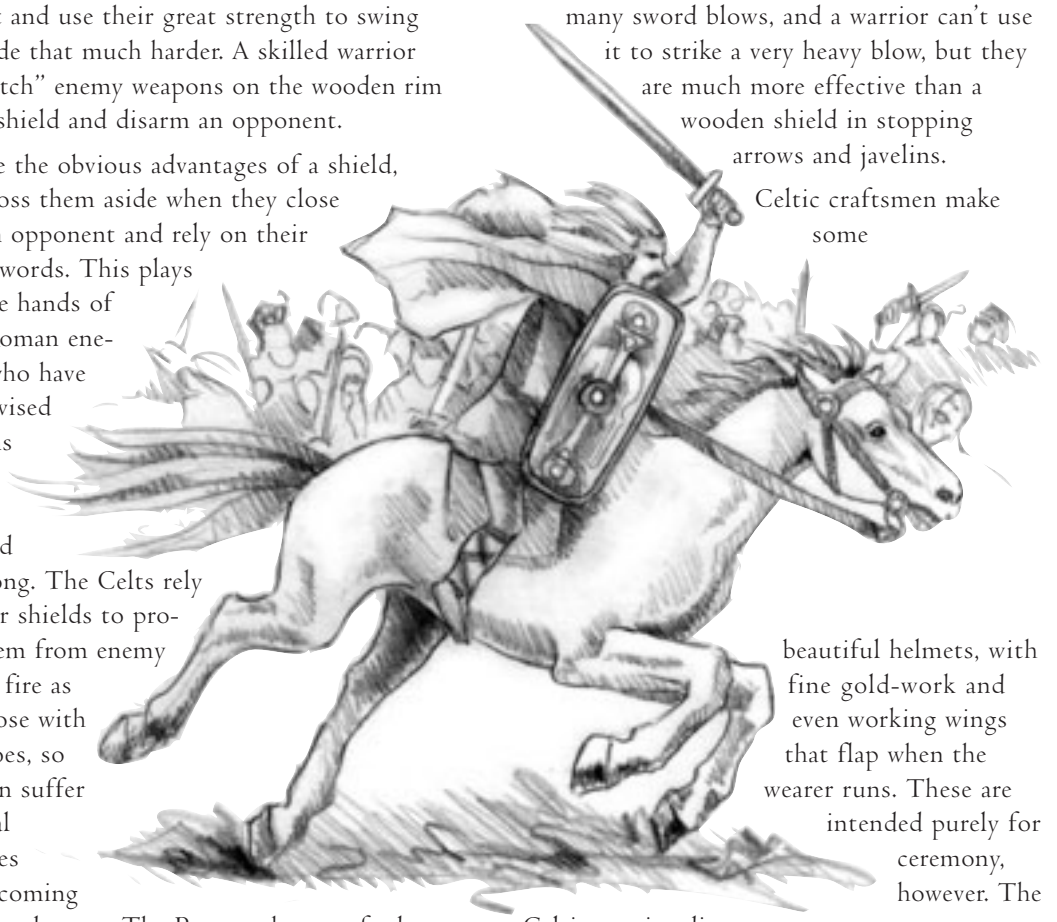
Turning aside an enemy's blows in single combat is considered both honorable and intelligent, however. For this, warriors carry a shield, which is wooden and oval- or round-shaped with iron ridges across it to deflect enemy blades. Celts also use their swords to parry a foe's weapon, and some especially skilled warriors can even achieve this with a thrusting spear (though this means catching the enemy's blade on the short haft directly under the spearhead because a heavy Celtic steel or iron blade will shatter even the stoutest wooden spear shaft at a single blow).

Using the wooden shield is an art in itself, though it is usually wielded in combination with a spear rather than a sword. The Celtic great sword is far too heavy to use one-handed, and even the handful of huge men theoretically capable of doing so instead put two hands on

the hilt and use their great strength to swing the blade that much harder. A skilled warrior can "catch" enemy weapons on the wooden rim of the shield and disarm an opponent.

Despite the obvious advantages of a shield, Celts toss them aside when they close with an opponent and rely on their heavy swords. This plays into the hands of their Roman enemies, who have also devised weapons and tactics to speed this along. The Celts rely on their shields to protect them from enemy missile fire as they close with their foes, so they can suffer minimal casualties before coming into sword range. The Romans have crafted their pila with a soft iron haft right behind the javelin's head. When they throw the javelin at charging Celts, it lodges in their wooden shields and bends at the haft. The Celt can't charge with a six-foot piece of wood dangling from his shield so he must either discard it or stop to remove it. The force of the javelin usually drives it deep into the wood (Romans throw them in a high, arcing motion to accentuate this) and the Celtic warrior must put the shield down to pull the javelin out, and, since it is bent, it is now useless, and the Celt can't throw it back. The Romans may not fully understand that the Celts are so enthralled by close combat that they would throw their shields away regardless of whether it had a javelin stuck in it or not.

Because they are planning to throw it aside at the moment of shock combat, many Celts prefer a shield made of wicker (woven, dried reeds). These are several layers thick, and much lighter than an oaken shield. They will not stop many sword blows, and a warrior can't use it to strike a very heavy blow, but they are much more effective than a wooden shield in stopping arrows and javelins.



Celtic craftsmen make some beautiful helmets, with fine gold-work and even working wings that flap when the wearer runs. These are intended purely for ceremony, however. The Celtic warrior disdains the helmet, both as a sign of weakness and because it would cover up his or her lovely hair. The successful warrior cannot afford a bad hair day.

Metalsmiths can also turn out some very fine mail for those Celts willing to wear it and able to afford the expensive armor. Slowly, Celtic warriors are learning that Romans are not honorable opponents and accepting the idea that one does not therefore have to fight them on purely honorable terms. Chiefs and sub-chiefs, usually being the most adept strategic thinkers of their tribe or clan, are more likely to wear mail. They are also in the best position to afford it. Their parasites often have mail as well, depending on the wealth and foresight of the chief. Some Celts also wear looted armor taken from fallen Romans, though this rarely fits well (Celts are substantially larger than Romans) and the Romans will attempt to capture and crucify Celts they spot wearing such gear.

Cavalry

> *On the side of his horse,*
> *Not meetly did he place his thigh*
> *On the long-legged, slender gray charger.*
> *Dark was his shaft, dark.*
> *Darker was his saddle.*
>
> **— Aneurin, *Gododdin,* Canto 50**

A number of Celtic tribes specialize in fighting from horseback. These are usually those tribes that have had prolonged contact with Greeks or Romans for several reasons. Greeks and especially Romans are not very good horsemen and do not breed good horses. They are willing to pay handsomely for mercenary cavalry.

Most Celtic warriors of sufficient wealth ride to battle, but dismount before action. The horse is for transport to the field of glory. Cavalry ride into battle, and this is not popular with more traditional Celtic tribes because it is harder to fight the sort of individual duel they prefer while mounted.

The Aedui have provided mercenary cavalry to Rome for a couple of generations now. Celtic cavalrymen serve as scouts and harass enemy columns and civilian targets. In battle, they are usually stationed on the army's flanks to protect them from being turned and thereby creating a disaster. They also probe for enemy weaknesses and try to turn their flanks. Both Romans and Celts use cavalry in this manner.

Celts fight from horseback with either sword or spear, riding past an enemy and slashing or stabbing. They also use the sheer bulk of the animal to ride down unmounted, fleeing foes. A horse must be trained for war to perform this last task; by nature, horses do not like to step on squishy objects. But Celts do not have the stirrup, and so cannot use lances to put the full force of a horse's charge behind a blow – doing so without stirrups will send the rider flying backwards off the horse once the lance strikes home.

Warrior Societies

> *Since there are a hundred men in one house*
> *I know the care of distress.*
> *The chief of the men must pay the contribution*
>
> **— Aneurin, *Gododdin,* Canto 44**

For impulses similar to those driving mercenary service – the inability to fight constantly or even very often due to economic pressures – some leave their tribes to band together with other warriors. These groups exist outside tribal society, depending on their own justice and social organization. Because they lack these bonds, they cannot marry or form other individual contracts unless they leave the warrior band and are accepted back into a tribe. This is usually the one into which they were born, but the tribe is under no obligation to take them back.

The warrior bands wander the Celtic world, making others' fights their own. During times of strife they wield great power; because they don't having to break off to take in the harvest, they can stay in the field much longer than the usual tribal levy. Mediocre warriors don't normally seek to join a warrior society and wouldn't be accepted if they did. Moreover, the constant use of arms has made these warriors much more proficient than the typical Celt.

Men and women of common birth can also flee their tribe and join a warrior society to seek higher status. This is a perilous course because they most likely will be put to death if found out. But, for those who cannot bear the drudgery of slopping hogs for one more day, it is a chance to break the bonds placed on them at birth.

Warrior societies are overwhelmingly male, though a few women are known to join up periodically. Bands of female warriors are also occasionally encountered, though these are rare. The bands are socially very conservative, feeling that they carry the true Celtic culture within them.

A warrior band may be hired for mercenary service by a foreign ruler or by a Celtic tribe. The tribes of the Belgae (inhabiting the region

that will one day be known as northern France) have banded together and sworn to raise funds to hire as many mercenaries as possible to bolster their own strength for the struggle against Rome. Their prime hiring ground is among the Celtic warrior societies of Britannia, though they have drawn in recruits from all over Europe, and not all of them are Celtic in origin. There are several well-known warrior societies, each with numerous bands wandering the Celtic world.

Fianna Eirinn

These are the followers of the legendary Fionn mac Cumaill (Finn MacCool), the great Irish warrior. The Fianna (also spelled Fiana) guard the High King of Ireland and serve as his enforcers. They live off the contributions of the king and those they assist and by hunting game. They'll hunt most anything, but are known for tackling the most dangerous beasts (especially wild boar).

For six months of the year, the Fianna live in Irish villages, though never those of their own tribe. In summer, they live in the wilds, hunting and sleeping under the stars to prepare themselves better for war.

To join the Fianna, a warrior must display his or her skills with weapons and also in poetry. It is not enough to perform great deeds – the Fianna must be able to recite the brave deeds of their comrades to make sure they are never forgotten. The candidate is then tested. He or she stands in a shallow pit with only a shield and a small stick for protection while nine warriors hurl spears at him or her at once. If any get through, the candidate is rejected (assuming he or she still lives).

Next, the would-be Fianna is chased through a thick forest by armed warriors If any of them manage to wound the candidate, he or she fails. The candidate also fails if his or her hair came loose during the flight, if he or she had broken a single branch, or if his or her hands trembled once it was over.

The candidate must also show great footspeed and agility: the ability to leap over a branch as high as his or her head and, at full speed, run under one placed at the height of his or her knees.

Once accepted, the Fianna are placed under geasa to never engage in blood feuds, to never turn his or her back in battle, to never accept a marriage dowry and to never refuse hospitality to a stranger. Though Fianna may marry, they may not marry one another and their first loyalty must be to the order.

The High King of Ireland Fiachadh established the Fianna Eirinn in 300 BC, to give the Celts a force that could stand up to the Romans in battle. The society is organized in peacetime into three regiments, of three thousand men each. They are trained along Roman lines, and carry short iron stabbing swords and large rectangular shields much

The Real Fianna

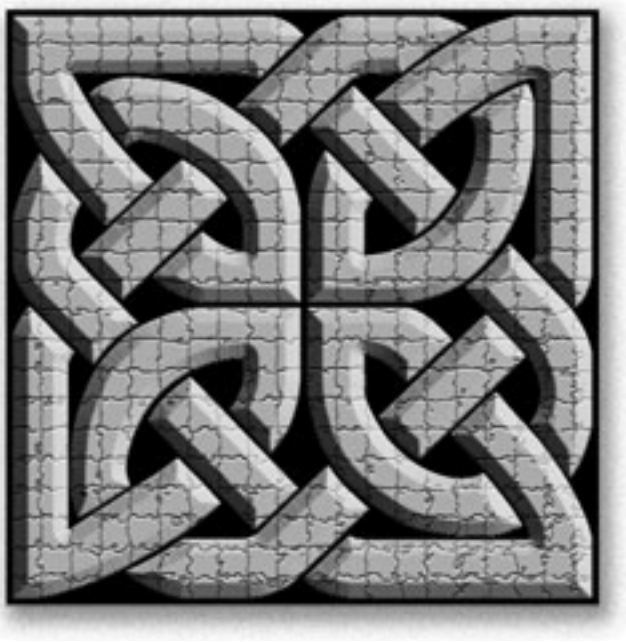
Irish chroniclers who passed along the stories of Fionn mac Cumhaill and his brave followers certainly believed these men to be real historical personages. More recent historians have been less accepting, pointing out that Finn's name and that of his father imply that they are both aspects of Camulus, the god of the heavens and of war.

Fionn and his men are most commonly seen opposing foreign invaders, again a powerful theme in Celtic myth, battling the evil Cat-Heads who would oppress Ireland. They are the spiritual heirs of the Tuatha de Danaan, waging war with the Formori. The tales became extremely popular in the Ninth Century, when the Irish Celts began their centuries-long conflict with Norse invaders.

Early Irish writers insisted on the reality of the Fianna, and gave details as to its organization. Because it fits the needs of the game, we have chosen to believe them here.

like the legions. In wartime, they are supplemented by thousands of tribal levies to form an unstoppable army.

The Fianna never leave Ireland, instead defending its coasts from enemy invasion. They march quickly to aid any prince whose domain is assailed by foreigners, but rarely intervene in battles between Irish rulers. More information on the Fianna Eirinn can be found in Chapter 9.



Gaestatae

A very old society (literally, "the spearmen"), these warriors come mostly from Gaulish tribes, who have forsaken tribal life for a professional military career. The emergence of this group parallels the early development of a Celtic state structure: as cities are founded and the tribes grope their way toward acknowledging kings, so do some warriors step forward to meet the need for a standing army.

The Gaestatae fight naked to emphasize that they have not forsaken the old Celtic ways of battle. But they have sworn to put aside individual honors to pursue that of the society. They carry swords for close-quarters fighting, but this is not their main function. The Gaestatae are masters of the spear and have mimicked the shield-walls employed by Romans, Germans, and Greeks in various forms. Celts understand this tactic, and tribal warriors will briefly deploy in this formation, but remaining in place goes against all Celtic belief. Eventually, the warriors break formation and charge madly at the foe in search of glory.

Gaestatae spearmen have trained to maneuver in formation, keeping their wall of shields intact and only breaking into a charge when ordered by their officers. They are disciplined and salty enough to withstand enemy cavalry, though, in these days before the stirrup, mounted warriors are not as deadly as they will one day become.

Unit sizes vary among the Gaestatae. As recruits join a band and are trained, eventually the group becomes too large and unwieldy. At that point, it splits into two smaller groups. Gaestatae are mercenaries, and make it a point of honor to fight to the death for their paymasters, even against other Gaestatae. They are paid well, and a member can retire at any time when the band is not actively engaged in warfare, returning to his or her tribe with the loot gained from mercenary service. But during his time in the Gaestatae, the spearman renounces all connections to family, clan, and tribe. These bonds do not exist, and a member will be expected to fight against friends and family if so required, and to kill them without remorse. Almost all Gaestatae are male, but there is no formal ban on female participation beyond the ingrained prejudices of the membership. All members of a band must agree when a new recruit is ready for active service.

Gaestatae do not take their enemies' heads, for they do not recognize individual glory. They also will not send forth champions for single combat. They exist to give the Celtic tribes at least one body of trained and disciplined infantry that will not give in to wild rushes or blood lust. There are few of these men and women, but they are greatly feared. More on the Gaestatae is available in Chapter 9.

Wild Women

Closely tied to the Druidic religion is the warrior society known simply as the "Wild

Women." These are female warriors who have sworn to defend the sacred oak groves and the Druids themselves at the cost of their own lives if necessary. Candidates must show not only a devotion to the faith, but a skill with arms.

The wild women train constantly, but, since their main function is to guard selected sites or people, they concentrate on individual skills rather than fighting as a unit. The Druids are known to commit them to battle, particularly against the Romans. Because the Druids are one of the focal points of the anti-Roman movement, they cannot be seen holding back what little military force they possess, and so the Wild Women are often in the forefront of attacks on Rome.

Despite this, there are few of these devout soldiers. Some fought in Gaul against Caesar and others against Emperor Claudius, but the largest commitment of them appears to have been in defense of the Druidic groves on Anglesey in 60 AD. Candidates are trained by female masters at Anglesey and then assigned to posts in Britannia. Rarely, they are sent to Gaul to guard sites or Druids, but almost all recruits are British and they remain in the islands.

Like other warrior societies, a Wild Woman abandons her tribe and family when she takes the oath. She does not forswear sex, but does renounce marriage. Children she might bear are fostered out, but a Wild Woman who becomes pregnant will lose great status (since she is unable to perform her duties for some time, and this is a drain on the whole society).

The name of the society comes from the performance of these women in action: they apparently have no fear (using mental exercises, and psychotropic drugs, to help build a frenzy before action). They attack with no regard for personal safety, flinging themselves on their enemies with reckless abandon. Their initial charge is hard to stand, but if they do not overwhelm their opponents quickly they usually suffer heavy casualties. While their oath says nothing about refusal to retreat, their wild style of fighting usually means they either win or die. A Wild Woman does swear to never be taken captive and will stab herself to death before surrendering. Despite their savagery in battle, they are well-educated and are expected to be familiar with Druidic methods and the great epic poetry of the Celts.

Wild Women dress all in black, to symbolize the feminine ties to the moon. They prefer the spear and dagger as their weapons of choice. Unlike many male warriors, they have no problem wearing armor since they have sworn not to seek personal glory. They usually choose to don a mail shirt under their black tunics. Their oaths compel them to obey the Druids in all things, and, while this usually consists of guard duty, they also have been known to carry out special missions.

Most Wild Women are young. It is acceptable to retire from the society, and those who do are greatly honored for their service to the Druidic religion. They will be well cared-for, as they are considered clients of the Druids and thus have great status. Most who retire do so while still young enough to marry and raise a family.

6
Celtic Women

Unlike most other European cultures, or most others on the rest of the planet for that matter, the Celts value women as members of society. It remains a man's world; "gender equality" is a bizarre, alien concept to almost all peoples of this age. However, in Celtic legend and mythology women appear as goddess, priest, prophet, judge, and numerous other roles. Although the Celtic society is still very male-oriented, women occupy many of the positions that are dominated by men in other societies. In many cases, they appear as equals and not in subordination. Women's wisdom, knowledge, and judgment are valued; the Celts have no use for the Roman ideal of beautiful women admired for their bodies and nothing more. They are not in charge, but they are given a greater position of control within society, and the occasional woman may break the bonds of the social order and become a druid, a ruling queen, or other prominent figure. Women in Celtic lands speak their minds and are heard. They have a high degree of physical and emotional liberation, able to grant sexual favors as they wish. The position of Celtic women in society differs greatly from that of women in Greek and Roman society. In Greece, women have no political rights, suffer marriages arranged by their fathers, and cannot inherit property. They are not even considered part of civil society (the polis*), but only an element of a man's household (the* oikos*). In Rome, a woman's absolute loyalty to her husband is expected, and she has few political rights in any manner. A Roman man can kill his wife or children on a whim, or if he is merciful divorce her simply by declaring the marriage dissolved.*

This greater social status also means that Celtic women receive much better portions of food than is often the case elsewhere. In many cultures, during famines women are the first to starve. And the rich and varied Celtic diet, featuring meats, milk and fruits or vegetables in addition to the grains on which other peoples rely, provides much better health. While the concept of pre-natal vitamin treatment lies a couple of thousand years in the future, Celtic mothers-to-be enjoy many of the same benefits. The larger, better-fed Celtic woman is therefore more likely to carry a fetus to term than one of Greek or Roman origin and is much better equipped to breastfeed the infant later. Celtic women nurse their own children; a far healthier practice than the use of wet-nurses as is common among upper-class Romans. Romans greatly prize Celtic female slaves as wet-nurses; to make sure the milk flows only to the master's child, the slave woman's infant is killed.

Roman writers continually mention the vast capacity of Celtic women for child-bearing. Historical data does bear out that Celtic populations could increase incredibly quickly barring the effects of plague, famine, or war. In reality, Celtic women have no greater genetic propensity to bear healthy children than those of any other race. There are some social and economic differences, however, which yield very similar effects.

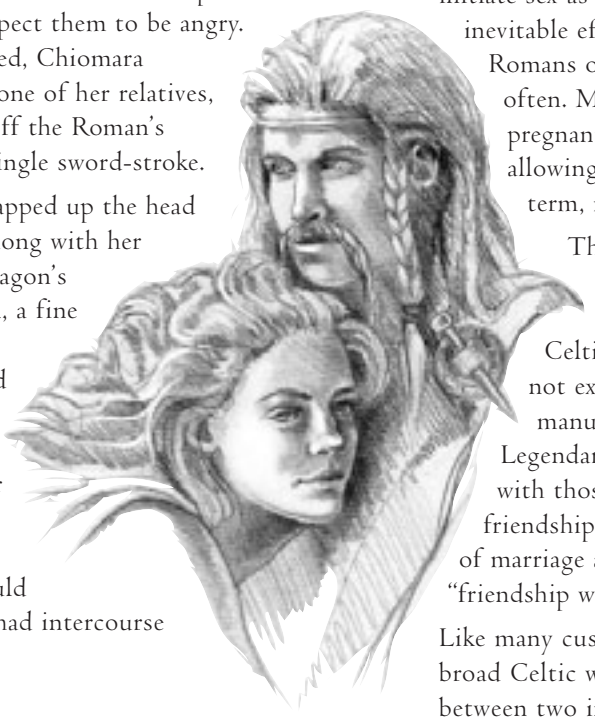
Outsiders always note the great size of Celtic women. Though smaller than their male relations, themselves larger than the human norm, Celtic women are usually over 5-foot-6 (the typical Roman legionary stands only 5-foot-4). As will be the case in the 21st Century, larger bodies often handle the strain of childbirth easier than their smaller sisters. Wide hips matter.

Rape

Far in the future, many people will come to identify with Celtic culture thanks to the relatively privileged position enjoyed by women in Celtic tribes. The key difference between the Celtic view on gender and that of the Greeks, Romans, or even the otherwise similar Germans, is that women are individuals capable of honor. They are not property simply by virtue of biology (though they can fall into slave status in the same manner as a male Celt). Women of the upper classes can own property in their own right, and have legal status if wronged.

Rape is seen as a terrible crime against the woman's honor, something that confuses the Romans to no end. Among the Romans it is a property crime, and the victim (the woman's husband or father) can be easily compensated with cash for damage to said property.

For example, in 189 AD a Roman centurion captured a Celtic woman named Chiomara, wife of the Galatian chief Ortiagon. The centurion raped her, and demanded a hefty ransom for her return. Chiomara's clansmen agreed, and met the Roman by a riverbank. After collecting the gold, the Roman engaged in friendly banter with the Celts. By his standards, a simple business transaction had taken place and he did not expect them to be angry. As they chatted, Chiomara motioned to one of her relatives, who lopped off the Roman's head with a single sword-stroke.



Chiomara wrapped up the head and took it along with her to lay at Ortiagon's feet. "Woman, a fine thing is good faith," he told her, pleased with her gift. "A better thing," she replied, "only one man should be alive who had intercourse with me."

Celtic tradition recognizes two forms of rape: that by force and that by deceit. In a case of forcible rape, the victimized woman is due an honor price (amount depending on her status), and the judge also adds a punitive fine. In case of rape by deceit (the victim was drunk or otherwise unable to give consent) only the honor price is paid. There is not complete gender equality, however – Celts do not view a woman as capable of raping a man by deceit.

A woman who has been raped or assaulted may seek recourse for that crime. If it is proven in a court of law before the Vates, the man may be executed or have his genitalia removed in addition to the payment of an honor price. Rape is considered an extremely serious offense in the Celtic lands, and is never punished softly. One such Celtic law reads: "If a woman makes an assignation with a man to come to her bed or behind a bush the man is not guilty of rape even if she screams. If she has not agreed to the meeting, however, he is guilty as soon as she screams."

Sex and the Single Celt

In another departure from the practices of their neighbors, the comparatively heightened status of women means that they are expected to initiate sex as often as are their husbands. The inevitable effect is that, when compared to Romans or Germans, Celts have sex more often. More opportunities to become pregnant, combined with greater health allowing more pregnancies to come to term, means more children.

This also has led to the Greek and Roman view of all Celtic women as promiscuous, with claims that Celtic men share wives. While this is not exactly true, neither is it a lie manufactured from whole cloth. Legendary Queen Maeve, after all, has sex with those with whom she desires friendship. And in many tribes, lesser levels of marriage are also recognized (in essence, "friendship with privileges").

Like many customs, marriage varies within the broad Celtic world. It is seen as a bond between two independent people rather than

the transfer of property rights from father to husband. Marriage is a pact formed for the purpose of procreation. The female partner does not give up her legal or property rights, and can make agreements outside the marriage with or without her husband's consent. This can theoretically extend to feuds by a woman against her husband and his clan, though to actively participate in a violent act against one's spouse (or to consent to such an act by others) is considered very bad form and leads to substantial loss of status. A marriage bond may legally exist only to spawn children, but in practical terms it represents an alliance between individuals and usually their families as well.

Powerful families arrange marriages between their children to cement political bonds. Daughters have much less say in these arrangements and are considered less desirable. A child of marriage age is expected to assent to the needs of his or her family.

Lack of sexual satisfaction is considered grounds for divorce. Adultery is terribly embarrassing to the other marriage partner, and it indicates their inability to please their spouse. If one partner grows very fat, divorce almost always results; Celts find obesity highly unattractive and consider such a person unable to satisfy their partner.

Celts frown on homosexuality. They are not as rabid in their hatred for the practice as the Germans, who burn those caught in same-sex liaisons to death. But those who are openly gay are shunned by society, and catching a spouse in such an act is always cause for immediate divorce.

The one exception is among the warrior societies. Many men and women join these societies because of their sexual orientation, which is accepted in these groups. Here, same-sex relationships are seen as another aspect of the bonding between comrades-in-arms.

It should be noted that a married woman has "honor in sex." Women who are married are expected to hold true to that promise (whether it is for a year or for life) and never have intercourse with anyone other than their husband. However, unmarried woman are not expected to be ashamed or ignore opportunities for sex. This sexual freedom frightens and confuses Greeks and Romans, who believe that Celtic women are harlots and sexual mavens. Celtic rites often require sex to be performed in order to consecrate the ritual (particularly a ritual of fertility such as those performed at Beltaine or other planting festivals). The women who grow pregnant from these rites are considered to bear the child of a god since most of them will not know who their partners were from the actual rite.

It is equally common for women in the Celtic world to ask for a man's hand as it is for a man to ask a woman to marry him. Such "equality" does not extend to all things in the home, but sex and sexuality in particular is seen as a partnership where both sexes must participate in order for balance to be attained. Such things are seen as "forward" or "harlot-like" by the Romans, but in the lands of the Celts it is a simple matter of practicality.

Women Warriors

The image of powerful warrior queens leading gender-balanced armies into battle is out of pure fantasy. Celtic women are not expected to bear arms in the normal course of events. But

Intramarital Feuds and Status

It is bad form to engage in a feud with one's spouse, even if one's clan is involved. To commit an act of violence against one's spouse or to endorse one (even by tacit complicity) costs the loss of one Status Level. Characters who are Level 0 must purchase a Status Level before they can rise to Status Level 1. Thus, a character of Status Level 0, who lost a level owing to a feud, would have to buy Status Level 1 twice before he or she could gain the benefits.

neither is it completely outside the bounds of this culture for a woman to seek glory in battle, usually driven by vengeance for some wrong against her or her family which no male relative is willing or able to make right.

Female soldiers are widespread in Irish armies, are less common in Britain, and are rare on the continent. In Ireland, these are female slaves ("cumalach"), often highly unwilling participants. They are armed with long, hooked poles, and usually deployed against similar women. Women apparently fought regularly in earlier times, but the practice only remains on the very fringes of Celtic society.

The story is quite different for individual women. Though they rarely march into battle, they are known for fiercely defending their homes from marauding Romans. Few women own their own weapons and instead pick up some of their male relations' arms in these cases. Spears seem to be favored since most upper-class women have some experience using them in hunting. Women of the appropriate social status are not typically banned from owning weapons, but, because they rarely plan to use them ahead of time, they have little need for such expensive items. Probably because of the phallic symbolism of the sword, male Celtic warriors seem much more at ease with a female comrade wielding a spear. Another reason that women more often fight with spear rather than sword is that the former is a weapon which relies on finesse rather than arm-strength. Because men are typically stronger in their upper bodies and arms than women, placing their lives against that balance would be foolish for the female warrior. Spears, however, rely on dexterity and footwork – something at which women excel naturally. Using the spear, therefore, is the wiser choice.

A woman who wants to fight will almost always be allowed to participate in battle, but such women are seldom seen. The entire weight of cultural conditioning leads girls away from the study of arms and pushes boys toward it, but it is not strictly forbidden to girls. Since adventurers are by their very nature unusual people, a Celtic female warrior or fighter character would not be out of place but large numbers of them would be.

Warrior queens are more common because a queen is expected to lead her people. A more experienced male general might be chosen for battles involving only her own tribe or clan since her authority is less likely to be questioned. But for large-scale wars involving coalitions of tribes, the political leader must also participate in combat. In these cases, the other tribes agree to follow a specific leader into battle, and they mean this in literal terms. Substitution is rarely accepted.

Women, like their male counterparts, often strip themselves naked or at least topless when going into battle by choice. Body paint, however, is much rarer for female warriors than for men. Just why is not clear, but it is probably related to the fact that Celtic women wear makeup to heighten their beauty while men only paint themselves for battle. Thus, the act of putting on paint has less special excitement for a woman because she already has some experience of this. When a man puts on colors, it is for one reason only: to make war. As with body painting, women are also much less likely to stiffen their hair into spiked patterns,

probably for the same reasons. Tales of great female warriors uniformly mention their flowing hair streaming behind them. Women warriors know that they are unusual and want their enemies to recognize and fear them. Some female warriors in Britannia are sworn to protect the Druidic groves. They wear stark black cloaks, tunics and loose-fitting trousers. They often wear mail shirts underneath this garb. See "Wild Women" in Chapter 5.

While women do not participate in battle in large numbers, they do show up as spectators and cheer the warriors on. A warrior enjoys fighting under the eyes of his woman or women. Children come along as well, making war a spectator sport for the Celts. When Celt fights Celt, these camp followers are considered strictly off-limits and are rarely if ever harmed. Since Celts use few ranged weapons, the risk to the fans is very low. Germans are offended by the sight since they believe a woman has no place even watching men at play, but should they defeat the Celtic warriors they usually will not harm the women. The Germans of this era, at least, find no honor in massacring non-combatants. Romans, however, see their presence as an opportunity for rape and slaughter. A victorious Roman army will often engage in mass rape of any females it captures, murdering them afterwards or selling them into slavery.

Women and the Priesthood

There is a delicate balance between women and religion. In many cultures, females are seen as the more fervent sex – their energy and respect for religion drives them and makes them ideal worshippers. However, they are not usually allowed to be active leaders in the church or lead rituals for the religious prosperity of the land and the people. In the Celtic world, these strictures definitely still exist, although there are many activities and leadership positions that women can and do take.

Boudicca

One of the Celtic warrior-queens recorded as an historical figure (more than mythological) by both the Romans and Greeks is Boudicca, Queen of the British Iceni tribe. The Iceni were a Celtic tribe living in Norfolk and Suffolk in Eastern Britain. Boudicca, the widow of King Prasutagus, became Queen of the Iceni and welcomed the Romans into her land as guests, but they betrayed her hospitality. A war began between the two factions, and Boudiccia was defeated. Afterwards "she was disgraced with cruel stripes, her daughters ravished by the Romans, and her relations reduced to slavery," according to the Koman historian Tacitus.

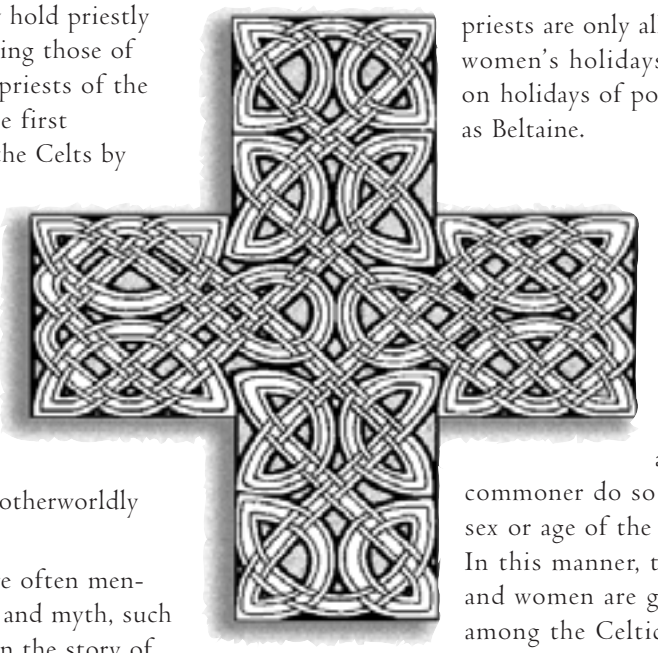
The Iceni responded with a cry for war, and Boudicca led them against the Romans. Several other tribes took the field alongside her, angered over Roman colonists' attempts to enslave free men and women. She chose a propitious moment, when the main Roman forces had marched to the other side of Britain to happily slaughter the Druids of Anglesey.

Boudicca, in a chariot with her two daughters before her, drove through the ranks. She took the field like any other soldier would to assert the cause of public liberty and to seek revenge for her body and her two daughters. "A legion of retired Roman soldiers dared to face the Iceni," writes Tacitus. "They paid for their rashness with their lives."

Things went less well for the warrior queen when the main Roman army of 10,000 battle-hardened troops arrived. Boudicca fought ferociously, leading her troops in a massive charge against the Roman ranks. The Romans held their ground, and may have slaughtered as many as 80,000 Iceni and other Britons. Rather than face Roman justice a second time, Boudicca killed herself with poison.

Women are seen as the givers of life. This ability is respected and revered and given a mystical quality. It is something only women can do through mysterious circumstances. They bring forth each person upon the Earth, and no man would be born without them. Pregnancy itself shows the magical properties of women, as their bodies change shape – always a sign of divine power. The tribes of the Celts have sacred women among their numbers: midwives, medicine women, wise women, and so on. Certain rituals may only be performed by women, or they must have a woman in their midst in order to be properly completed. This balance is highly important to Celtic belief. There are many legends that describe the relationship between Celtic kings and their domains. The King is linked to the land through a marriage to a goddess of fertility and prosperity, and this "sacred marriage" is inviolate. The land itself is seen as a woman, feminine in nature and capable of giving life.

Women can be heroes, winning respect for their valor in battle or wise leadership. So, too, can they hold priestly positions, including those of druids, the true priests of the Celtic world. The first observations of the Celts by Roman and other sources speak of the presence of women as priests or seers, and say that they are revered for their occult and otherworldly skills.



Female druids are often mentioned in legend and myth, such as those lauded in the story of Finn. He was raised by a druid or "wise woman" along with another woman. He was born with no father to raise him and brought to the druid at the request of his mother. The legend continues, saying that she taught Finn war craft, hunting, and fishing and also acted as a guardian and advisor, warning him of danger and teaching him the lore of kings and the wisdom of sages.

Female druids are also seen as symbols of sacrifice. To become a druid, a woman must not only be exemplary in wisdom and knowledge, she must also give up her sexual life and never become bound to any man. Any children she bears as a result of the rites of the Celts are abandoned and given to the midwives of other tribes and villages, and they are not raised by their natural mother. They are raised in a manner similar to foster children, but they never return to their mother and are not supposed to even learn her true identity.

The moon is seen as a feminine symbol within the Celtic lands, representing a woman's cycle, and indeed, the cycle of life. However, it is also seen as a shadow of the sun – the male figure and more powerful of the two. So, too, are women beneath men within the Druidic religion. They are given responsibilities but no leadership roles. Even those few women respected and revered as priests are only allowed to lead during women's holidays or to share the role on holidays of polarity and sexuality, such as Beltaine.

Women and Celtic Law

The codes of law in Celtic countries are exceptionally well defined, and the druids and vates who interpret and apply the law to the commoner do so without regard to the sex or age of the individual petitioner. In this manner, the law is truly blind, and women are given equal rights among the Celtic tribes. There is a long-standing tradition of women acting as mediators or judges in political and military disputes. All Celts of the elite classes are expected to be responsible for knowledge of the law.

Marital Assets

A woman retains the wealth she brings into a marriage, it is considered hers by right of inheritance, and will pass to her children, though not to her husband. If she dies without issue, her property may be equally claimed by her husband or by her closest living blood relatives. A woman may divorce a man, and, if she does, she retains and leaves with the property that she brought into the marriage. In some circumstances, this may be added to by the profits of their union, and the woman may be allowed to keep certain property claimed by both members of the family. Children go with the woman in almost all cases and are never considered the "property" of either spouse. Marriage of landowning people is often for 20 years initially, with a renewal if the parties so agree (by this point in their lives, however, both parties would be considered fairly old). The marriage itself is frequently preceded by a trial marriage, usually for a single year. With divorce allowable for cause, few choose not to renew an expired marriage, but the option remains.

Children

The place of children in any culture says a great deal about its future. Celtic children under the age of 14 have no legal responsibilities and therefore no official capacity. They are not bound by general law, although they can be tried as an adult if their crime is particularly heinous. Likewise, they are not expected to serve in battle, nor are they asked to leave their village in times of war. Offenses by and against children are usually dealt with by the father, mother, or close relative, who can be held responsible for the young individual's actions, even to the point of suffering all punishment that would usually be given to the offender.

The rearing of children is usually the responsibility of both parents, except when the child was conceived through rape, in which case the father alone is responsible.

Upon receiving his or her inheritance, a youth is considered to be, in all things, responsible for his or her actions. Typically, this occurs between the ages of 14 and 20 years. At this stage, the young Celt is a full member of the tribe and must abide by its regulations and laws. Anyone above 20 who has not yet inherited is still considered fully adult, and bound by the law.

There is no such thing as an illegitimate child; a mother has simply to "name" the child, and, if it is a son, he inherits part of his father's property. Children are to be brought up by both parents. If the child is a product of rape, he or she is the responsibility of the father alone. Children also have status, worth, and opportunities for education – whether male or female.

Children typically take their mother's name, and a woman's daughters inherit her possessions upon her death. Virginity is not highly valued, but fertility is very much in demand. In some tribes, a woman is not allowed to marry until she is proven to be pregnant (or has already borne a child). Such children are not seen as "bastards" or in any way condemned; they are welcomed, as are all children in the Celtic lands.

Fosterage

Fosterage is a well-respected custom among the Celts. It is common as a means of creating family alliances, and unions created through fosterage are considered as binding as those created through marriage. The fostered children are raised and educated as siblings, encouraging tight ties of friendship and familial devotion.

Consequently, ties to foster parents and siblings are very strong.

Fosterage is a legal contract considered beneficial for both parties. Members of the nobility practice it a great deal, considering it a preferable alternative to intermarriage between tribes. In these cases, the young sons and daughters of the tribal leaders are sent to the homes of other members of the nobility only a few years after their births. From the time the child is 4 until he or she is 14, they are in all ways considered the child of their adoptive tribe, which is responsible for the child's early training and education. The foster father is fully responsible legally for any offenses committed by the foster child.

This custom is also used to cement alliances and encourage a form of forced peace between two feuding tribes. Children of both sides are fostered to the other, where they serve as hostages to prevent hostilities. Usually children sent on these "forced fosterages" are respected for their courage and for the peace they create through time spent with the other tribe. When they return home, they are usually treated as young heroes. These children are rarely harmed if things go wrong: adult hostages are traded for that eventuality. The purpose of the young hostages is to forge new, long-lasting bonds between the hostile groups in the future.

Parents often seek to place their young children with a foster family of higher standing in the community. If they can manage it, the child is given advantages and opportunities that the original family might not be able to offer, thereby advancing himself or herself in society.

A foster child is not viewed as either a nuisance or a means of income. It is considered an honor in Celtic society to be asked to undertake such responsibility. Foster placement is a major decision and is one in which the entire extended family and clan are consulted. Unfortunately, it is yet another custom that is scorned by outsiders. The idea of giving away one's own children to an enemy – allowing one's son or daughter to be taken in and taught the ways of an opposing tribe – is unthinkable to the Greeks and Romans. They don't understand the nuances involved. The tradition does not call for simply handing over one's child. It also entails receiving the child of an enemy in return. The shared cultures of these children, in theory, allow the next generation to more fully understand each other and prevent future misunderstandings.

Fosterage occurs not only outside of tribes but within individual clans as well. Even the son of the chief is occasionally entrusted to be raised with an "inferior" family. An adequate reward is typically given to the "host" family, and it is considered a great honor. In some cases, the chief's most trusted servants vie for the right to foster the chief's children, regarding it as a symbol of the most sacred trust rather than a service. A firm and insoluble attachment often takes place among the chief's son and his foster brothers as a result. The young prince's foster siblings frequently end up serving as deeply trusted bodyguards and counselors into his old age.

Foster children usually learn the arts of war and statesmanship, using their unique position between the two tribes in order to establish a long-term relationship between them. Such children are often encouraged to become statesmen, diplomats, or soldiers. If the fostering is done within a single clan, the foster parents are formally allying themselves to a powerful royal or noble house, with all the advantages of status and political power afforded by such an arrangement. Even after the child is grown and takes his or her own responsibilities, the foster parents are always remembered for the great service they have performed for their tribe and its leaders.

Fostering a child also has other advantages, particularly to the natural parent. Strong ties are established between the original parental family and the foster family. In times of war, it is very easy to call on the foster family of one's child for material and military support. The child acts as a link between the two families – a link closer than the bonds of marriage.

7
Celtic Learning

The rough exterior of the Celtic world, with its tumbledown buildings, simple clothing, and lack of towns and cities, hides a sophisticated culture beneath the grime. The great stories of the Celtic gods and heroes are passed down orally and are continually re-told by bards and fili. However, these traditions are not the province of these specialized poets alone. In some cultures the poet classes are the repositories of a people's knowledge. They remember the past and repeat it on special occasions.

It is a given that Celtic poets have wide knowledge of these epics, but their function in society is not merely to remember. It is also to create. The Celts consider themselves to be part of their culture's Age of Heroes. They honor the heroes of the past and acknowledge their great deeds, but the time for great bravery is not over. New epics remain to be told.

The old tales are remembered by all. Warriors are expected to wield a sharpness of mind to match that of their sword. The proper Celtic warrior can recite the epic poems of his or her people as well as any other culture's bard or storyteller might. In some cultures both in this time and two millennia hence, that might be enough. But the Celts are not static antiquarians. It's not enough to recite the old tales; their underlying meanings must be understood as well. Celts will argue deep into the night over the subtext of their legends, and, when the Celtic love of heavy drinking is thrown in, the outcome of such deconstruction is often settled with swords. Later peoples will admire the Celts for this trait, imagining them holding graduate seminars over meat and mead. But the Celtic warrior is no effete academic: the tales exist to instill honor and fighting spirit in a person's soul.

Literacy

The Celts have a recently-developed alphabet, a concept given impetus by contact with the Romans. The Ogham alphabet consists of 20 figures, each of which corresponds to a tree. They are expressed as slashes, usually carved on the edge of a standing stone. The 20 are grouped into four families each of five symbols: the first three are consonants, followed by vowels.

According to legend, Ogma, the most learned of the Tuatha de Danaan, invented the Ogham script. Others attribute it to Ogmios, the Celtic form of the Greek hero Herakles.

Ogham script is less useful for writing and, like other early alphabets, is primarily used for inscriptions. For the Celts, these are plain and simple much like their buildings. The Celtic landscape is dotted with the small monuments that will later be known as standing stones: plain stones, usually rectangular and stood on their ends. They are polished smooth, and often have Ogham inscriptions along their edges. They serve as boundary markers separating the territory of different clans or tribes and also honor local gods. Some erect standing stones to call on the gods for special favors. The stones are held to have great powers, but they are only stand-ins for trees.

Very few can read or write the Ogham script. It is the province of druids for the most part, though a few others can interpret the symbols. This is not a language used to record events or information; the Celts depend on the prodigious memory of their bards and fili for that.

The Thinking Man's Warrior

There is much wisdom to be gained from retelling the old stories. There is also prestige to be had if one can correctly interpret the subtext. A Celt that gets into an argument over the meanings of a particular story can greatly enhance his or her reputation by winning.

If a character wins such an argument, he or she gains a temporary +1 Wisdom Bonus to his or her Charisma Modifier. This bonus is used on the first Charisma-based Skill check he or she makes after winning the argument. It must be used within a week or it expires.

To win an argument, the character must have the opponent acknowledge defeat, or a group of witnesses must agree that the character has the superior position. Not all opponents take such things very well, and a fight could easily occur out over a character's win. A fight could also break if both the character and his or her opponent are stubborn enough to come to blows over the disagreement. Such is life among the Celts.

Outsiders claim that the druids use Ogham as a secret language, passed down only among the priesthood. This is not exactly true, though neither is it entirely false. Few outside the druids understand the script, because few outside the druids have any use for written language.

Rome's Latin alphabet – ancestor of this one – is far more useful for everyday use. A number of Celtic peoples who have had close contact with Romans have adopted this form of writing. Usually they use their own language, writing it phonetically just like the Romans do with Latin. As in the rest of the world, the number of literate people is very low. Since Celts do not participate in commerce on a very large scale, there is no economic incentive for literacy.

Music

Celts like music very much, and bards and fili often put their compositions to music and sing rather than recite them. War, being the chief form of entertainment, is best done to musical accompaniment. Elite warriors are often accompanied by musicians, to entertain them in camp and to help raise their battle fury when the enemy is encountered.

Festivals always include music, and no feast is complete without it. Celts play the harp and its smaller cousin the lyre, sometimes accompanied by drummers beating a large kettle drum known as the timpan. Celtic musicians less often blow pipes: flutes, and the joined flutes known to the Greeks as panpipes.

While Celts blow trumpets before battle, they do not play tunes on them. Rather, these are used to produce loud braying sounds and induce terror in their enemies. Celts will sometimes sing about battle later, but they do not employ marching songs or songs of battle as the Germans so love to do. German tribes on the battlefield can easily be differentiated from Celts by their raucous, drunken singing. Germans even compose battle songs they sing for special occasions, a tradition they will retain for another two thousand years.

Music and Fili

Music is a powerful additive to the satire powers of the Fili. A Fili who accompanies his or her satire with music may make an additional Perform check at DC 15. Success grants the character a +1 Circumstance Bonus to the satire's Perform check for every four Class Levels the character has.

Bagpipes are a Persian instrument, recently adopted by some Roman legions for use in producing marching music, if such noise can be called music. Roman influence will eventually bring these to the Celts of Albion, and eventually they will be claimed as part of the Celtic heritage. Celts would approve of such noisemakers for the day of battle, but very few have seen or heard bagpipes during these times.

Like the spoken word, music has power. A fili with great musical skill can use the harp or lyre to put someone to sleep, as does the legendary harpist Fer Fí. Music increases the power of a fili's enchantments and satire, but cannot do damage by itself.

Celts also enjoy singing, both doing it themselves and listening to those with vocal skills. Drinking bouts often include mass singing by the inebriated, but individuals will also stand and deliver verses.

A Bardic Education

The Celtic view of education is simple: one learns from a master, through exercises and repetition. This is how young warriors learn to wield their weapons, and it is how bards and druids come to their knowledge.

Bardic schools exist among most of the Celtic tribes, though even now those of Ireland are held to be the best in the Celtic world. In a few centuries these will come to resemble the early Christian universities, with classrooms and a permanent faculty. But in this era, the bardic school is a gathering of students around a master who has agreed to teach them.

Masters agree to take on students for the same reasons 21st Century academicians will desire graduate

Ogham

Listed below are the 20 letters of the Ogham alphabet. They are listed first by the corresponding Latin letter, then its name, then its pronunciation, and finally the tree it represents. Properties of each tree and their significance to the Celts follow each entry.

First Aicme

B Beith "beth" Birch

Held to have a special power over love. Casting the bark of a white birch into flame or a running stream might cause one to meet their true love soon afterwards.

L Luis "lu-WEESH" Rowan

Known as the Mountain Ash in the modern United States, both its wood and its red berries protect against magic. Forked branches can help find water. Its wood is often used to carve magic wands and rods.

F Fearn "fairn" Alder

A whistle made of alder shoots can be used to bend the wind to one's will, or "whistle up the wind."

S Sail "SHA-ill" Willow

Tying a willow shoot in a knot while uttering a wish may cause it to come true. Willow bark can also be chewed to reduce pain and headache.

N Nion "NEE-on" Ash

Sleeping on ash leaves may bring prophetic dreams. Favored for rods and walking sticks, ash is very receptive to magic.

Second Aicme

H Huath "OO-ah" Hawthorn

Flowers of this tree can arouse men to great feats of love-making. The tree is used in love and marriage spells. Its wood contains great magical power and is often used for wands.

D Duir "dooor" Oak

The most powerful of trees, the king of the forest and thus the most sacred symbol in the Ogham alphabet. The gods speak to humanity through rustlings in the oak leaves, and eating acorns gathered at night promotes fertility. Burning oak leaves will purify a desecrated place.

Ogham (cont'd)

Second Aicme (cont'd)

T Tinne "CHIN-yuh" Holly

A phallic symbol for its white wood with faint grain, holly is used for spear shafts. Holly leaves and berries can be used in spells to promote sleep or easy death and can help make a man alluring to women. It is a symbol of the death and rebirth cycle of life.

C Coll "cull" Hazel

A tree of wisdom, eating its nuts can bring insight. The salmon of wisdom caught by Fionn MacCumhaill became wise by eating hazelnuts that had fallen into a stream. Fili also eat hazelnuts to sweeten their poetry. Divining rods are made of hazel, and it is a symbol of rejected love: to send a would-be or former male lover away, a woman hands him a hazel twig (symbolizing that she has become wise enough to get rid of him).

Q Quert "kwaart" Apple

Apples and cider are used in some love and healing spells. They can also be used to remove warts by rubbing the wart with a piece of apple and then discarding the fruit. As it rots, so does the wart fade.

Third Aicme

M Muin "mun" Vine

This doesn't grow in much of the Celtic lands, but it is revered as the source of wine. Intoxication is a blessing sent by the gods; thus the gods favor the sources of alcohol.

G Gort "gort" Ivy

Can be used to flavor ale and is thought to stop a cough.

NG nGéatal "NYEH-dul" Reed

Sweeping a sacred site with a reed broom purifies it. Burning reeds can quiet a forceful wind.

Z Straif "straf" Blackthorne

Symbolic of fate, it is used for harmful magic.

R Ruis "ruh-WEESH" Elder

A wand made of elder or playing a flute made of elder, can help drive away evil spirits or thoughts.

students: for prestige and cheap labor. The more supplicants who wish to study with a master and the choosier he or she can be in accepting them, the greater the prestige gained. And again echoing the practice of 2,000 years later, mere commoners are rarely admitted to bardic schools; the students must come from the privileged classes.

A bardic school is conducted by one or more fili; these can be male or female, but a mere bard is not thought fit to instruct. If more than one teacher is present, the head fili is known as the ollamh. The tribe hosting the school provides food and a building, sometimes an unused hut within an oppidum or, more often, a farmhouse outside it. Bardic schools make bad neighbors since the lessons are conducted at night. The fili begins with new students by forcing them to memorize vast quantities of epic poems. More advanced students compose their own to be critiqued by the fili and the other advanced students. Through constant work, and through constant constructive criticism, the would-be bard gains the skills necessary to perform the role.

The fili conducting the classes typically holds a post as chief bard to the local chief or king. The higher his or her position, the more prestige held by the school. Political leaders see the benefit in a prestigious bardic school: this yields them students from other tribes who can be pumped for information and, if necessary, seized as hostages.

During the day, the students perform physical labor to support the fili who teaches them: tending farm animals and doing manual labor. Almost all of them come from the noble classes and have never soiled themselves with such tasks before. This is intended to teach

humility and to break them of any airs their birth may have given them. Once admitted to a bardic school, it matters not who one's parents might have been. All honors must be earned, and this goes against the grain of Celtic culture. Thus, the severe measures necessary to bring an end to this arrogant habit.

To emphasize this break with the past, and to avoid distraction, all bardic instruction takes place in the dark. The student must use his or her mind and not rely on any memory devices or writing. Fili do not beat their students; this is not necessary. Wielding the sharp tongue that allows them to use satire as a weapon, they can easily humiliate a laggard with a few choice words.

The course of study lasts for six or seven years. It is intense, and many drop out before completing it. Not everyone has the strength of character necessary to see the process out to the end. Those who do not truly desire the mantle of bard are weeded out along the way.

In addition to their study of poetry, students also learn to play musical instruments, to perform feats of skill (juggling is highly popular) and study but are not yet allowed to practice the art of satire. During their time as students, they are sent several times a month to perform for local warriors at their feasts. As they are not yet bards, they have none of the social or practical protections of their class. If they do not please their audience, the drunken warriors may throw objects at them or beat them, and in a few extreme cases have been known to kill them. There is no widespread geis against killing or otherwise harming a student bard, and like the full-fledged bard they can command no honor-price if raped or killed.

To graduate, the new bard must compose an epic poem of their own. If it does not meet their master's standards, they will not have another chance. To become a fili requires another six years of study on top of these lessons. Few have the determination to see this through.

Ogham (cont'd)

Fourth Aicme

A **Ailm** **"AHL-um"** **Silver Fir**

This tree protects babies; burning its needles when a baby is born will protect both mother and child from harm.

O **Onn** **"un"** **Furze**

Burning its wood and flowers will help protect a warrior from harm in an upcoming battle.

U **Ur** **"oor"** **Heather**

Heather covers the open moors and, when it dies, eventually becomes peat. Roofs thatched with heather help repel evil spirits.

I **Eadha** **"EH-ya"** **Poplar**

The poplar lives fast and dies young. Thus it is symbolic of the short span of human life.

E **Iodhadh** **"EE-yo"** **Yew**

Poisonous, yew wood, leaves, and berries can also bring on visions in moderate amounts. Celts value the wood's beauty and use it for weapon handles and wine barrels.

Mimes

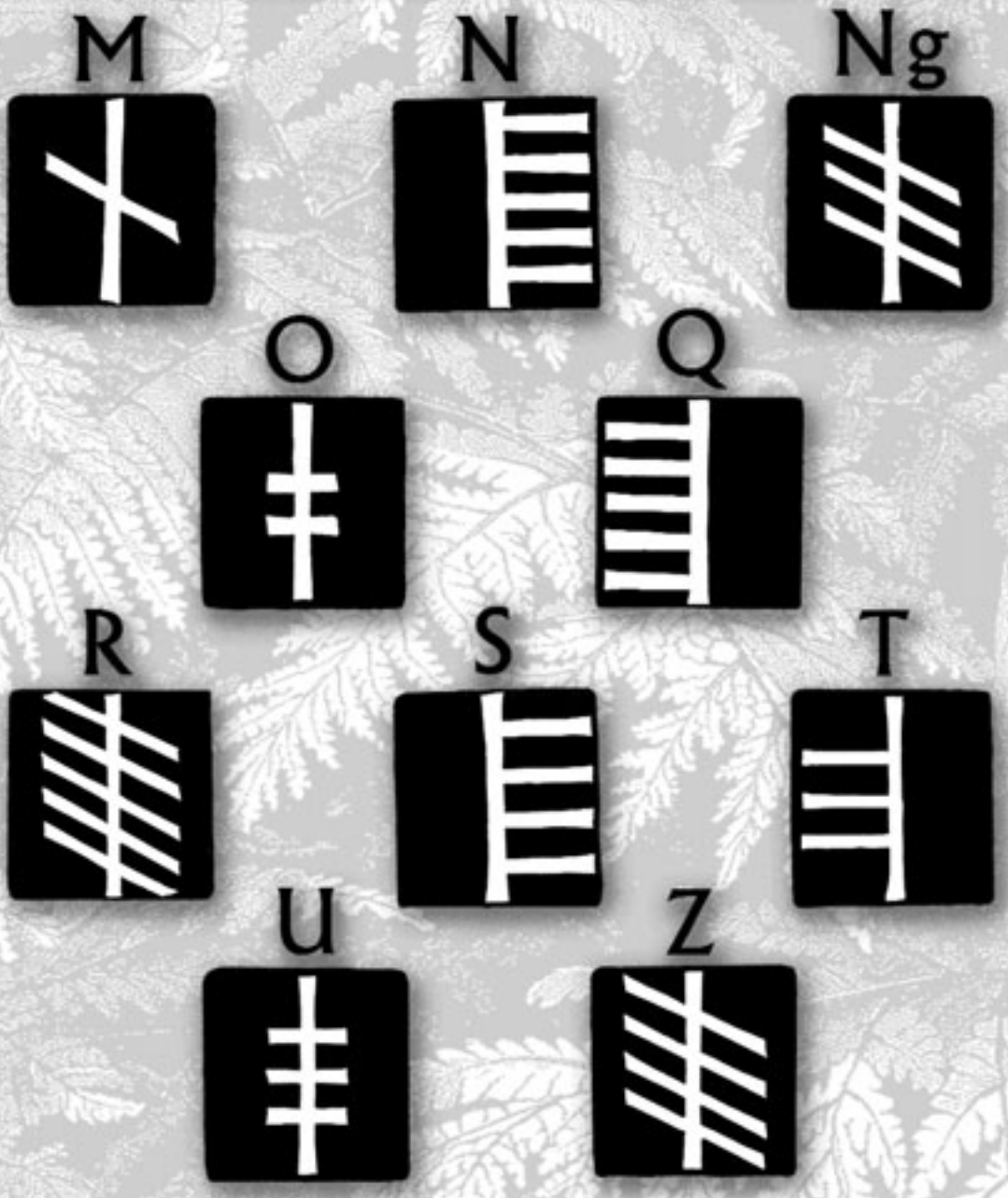
Troupes of mimes exist in the Celtic world, but no one can really say why. They are considered nearly criminal, and there is no penalty for killing a mime. A troupe that stays too long in one location and irritates the inhabitants stands a good chance of being exterminated.

There are no schools for mimes; they accept volunteers of any social class and teach them the skills of silent theater. These are social outcasts who have banded together to survive in a cruel world and often include escaped slaves and runaway peasants. They subsist off small donations given by the people of oppida, usually in hopes of making them go away.

Scorned by society, mimes are therefore nearly invisible. As long as no one is hunting a missing slave, they can come and go as they

Ogham:

Irish Alphabet



please. This freedom attracts some who can't seem to fit into society; in a later age, these people would probably turn to Internet discussion boards to unleash their rage at an unfair world. Lacking that outlet, they turn to street theater to express themselves.

Mimes often try to take for themselves the mantle of legitimacy held by bards and fili, claiming to simply be another form of highly-trained performer. Bards and fili hate them for this impertinence, and will use their own skills to encourage warriors to wet their blades with the blood of mimes.

Bards

The Celtic love of music puts bards in high demand. A traveling bard is no poor beggar; Celts will pay well for musical entertainment and for professionally-delivered poetry. The bard devises verses to extol the power and glory of his or her patron, but unless a single chieftain is willing to support the bard this can be dangerous: there can only be one supreme warrior, after all. The wise bard moves on after a while, before having to extol one paying customer over another within the hearing of both.

Bards also have a powerful political role: they transmit the messages of the chieftains and druids, and bring back intelligence to both. Thus, they are a focal point of anti-Roman resistance.

A skilled bard plays the harp and the lyre, and has a well-trained singing voice honed in the bardic schools. Some also play the drums and flutes, but these are less popular as they do not accompany singing. Bards are individualists; they chose their course because they sought attention. A bard wants to be the headliner, not just play in the band. It is rare for a bard to accompany someone else's singing, unless that someone is a paying customer.

Fili

The fili is the Celtic poet-singer, the basis of the generic fantasy bard. The fili is much more than a bard, having mystical powers much like those of a druid and the ability to see the past and future. Female satirists are known as berach but otherwise have the same powers and social status as male fili.

At the peak of his or her powers, the fili can cause death by satire, what the Celts call *ainmed* ("blemishing"). This usually means more than the English definition of "satire." Beyond inflicting shame and ridicule on the subject, the verses also possess magical properties and convey a curse as well. The target becomes overwhelmed with self-loathing for what they have done, turns red in the face and gasps for air, and soon dies of this grief. Alternatively, the targets of satire have been known to become so chagrined that they will take their own lives rather than live with the shame. Drunkenness is held to increase the powers of satire, especially when both the fili and target are inebriated.

Likewise, a fili can also use his or her powers for good, to strengthen the object of a song of praise. This is more unusual, as the song has no power unless the fili can attach deep, heartfelt emotion to the song. Like all people, it is easier to awaken anger in a fili than love at first sight. Chieftains who refuse a fili food and shelter, or warriors who insult them, are the chief victims of the blemishing. And much like the modern game industry, lesser talents who insult greater ones do so at the risk of receiving biting, deadly satire in return.

Satire is considered a form of assault under Brehon law (see below), and the penalties for

wounding with words are severe. Hanging an insulting nickname on someone is considered a high crime, as is satirizing the dead (who will feel the affects in the afterlife). There are seven forms of criminal satire:

- Giving someone an insulting nickname which persists.
- Satirizing an absent victim.
- Poking fun at someone's face.
- Provoking widespread laughter.
- Sneering at someone's physical form.
- Magnifying a physical blemish.
- Written satire.

While fili are greatly feared, they do have some legal vulnerabilities. They cannot form contracts since they are not to be trusted. Berach are classed as "bush-strumpets" and cannot demand an honor price if raped, and the sons of a berach (like those of slaves) cannot become chieftains.

At the highest levels, the fili or berach (known as ollam) has little to fear, as he or she has the social status of a minor king or senior chief and the right to travel with armed retainers. To refuse hospitality to an ollam and his or her entourage is to invite destruction.

A fili or berach can also divine the future or past, using their magical incantations to give themselves visions which they can then describe in verse. This is difficult and not always accurate.

Training is hard, and fili and berach attend the same bardic schools as their more mundane counterparts. All teaching is verbal, and the memorizations required are immense. Formal education lasts for 12 years, though many minor fili and berach then seek out a more learned practitioner to further hone their craft.

Fili and berach are also considered weapons of war. Some kings and chiefs employ entire bands of them in their armies, to shame the enemy's warriors and destroy their morale by chanting satires at them. The concentration necessary to kill another human by satire is difficult to attain in the heat of battle, but the legendary Cridenbel is said to have wiped out an entire tribe with his biting words. At times these bands appear on opposite sides and cast mockery at one another until the weaker side gives way, after which that side's warriors are lashed with brutal verses. These fighting fili are especially beloved by Morrigan the battle-goddess, who is known to appear at their sides and lend her weight to theirs should she hear an especially witty and cutting satire (known as a *rindad*).

The Fitness of Things

Celts have strong belief in personal honor, which they call "the Fitness of Things." For a person to have no honor is unthinkable; one who loses honor feels compelled to commit suicide. This is based on behavior, and especially on truth. Liars lose honor, and terrible things happen to them if they hear the truth spoken in their presence. The truth has power: liars are known to die, or their houses fall down, or their herds die, simply because someone spoke the truth to them.

Celtic society works because of this shared belief in honor and truth. Without it, the legal system would quickly crumble. A Celt will never

The Fitness of Things

Because Celts believe so strongly in honor and in telling the truth, lying is dangerous to them. A Celt who lies suffers a -1 Circumstance Penalty to all die rolls for 24 hours. The same fate meets someone who deals unfairly or could be said to be without honor.

These penalties are cumulative, so if the Celt lies more than once, he or she suffers multiple penalties. A character who tells three lies in a week or five in a month suffers the permanent loss of a point of Charisma. No one will respect a liar. Sadly, these penalties do not affect non-Celts.

take the easy way to power or riches if this seems somehow dishonorable.

Law

For the most part, Celts lack a central government to lay down laws. Instead they rely on a traditional set of laws called Brehon. Druids and vates often act as adjudicators as do respected men and women of great learning known simply as judges. Chieftains are subject to the decisions of these judges in theory, but in practice they have widespread immunity.

Celtic law covers both civil and criminal affairs. In a civil suit, the plaintiff must go to the dwelling of the accused and sit in front of it while fasting. Only someone of the same social standing may bring such a suit, of course. If a plaintiff starts such a fast, eating nothing while the sun shines, the defendant must do so as well. If the defendant wishes to break the fast, he or she must either pay what the plaintiff demands, or accept a judge's arbitration. To refuse is to lose all honor, unthinkable for a Celt.

Crimes are punishable by fines known as an honor-price. The honor-price varies according to the victim's social standing. If one does not accept the honor-price, a blood feud will break out. Killing a miscreant does not equal punishment: the killer still owes an honor-price to the victim's heirs, no matter how horrid his or her offense might have been. Crimes include attacks against another person (murder, robbery, rape, assault) and religious offenses as well.

Murder and assault are subject to interpretation, however, because it is usually not considered criminal to kill or injure someone in a fair fight. However, judges have been known to rule against a powerful warrior who slew or harmed a much weaker opponent even if the weaker combatant started the fight. Not being a fair fight, the victor is guilty and must pay an honor-price. Even great heroes have been convicted of such crimes. This does not apply to lower classes, of course: while a peasant may not kill another with impunity, a warrior most certainly may do so.

Once an honor-price has been paid, however, any stain is wiped away. It is considered bad form to hold a grudge against someone who made good their debt in this fashion. However, it is unusual to find a wealthy man or woman committing strings of crimes and merrily paying their way free; such acts would surely at some point ruin their honor, and they would plunge a dagger into their own heart.

Geis

The embodiment of honor is the keeping of oaths, called geasa (singular, geis). A geis is not always voluntary and often is similar to a personal taboo. For example, the hero Cu Chulainn made his name by slaying the great hound of Culann and thus could not eat the flesh of a dog lest he die himself.

A Celt may place a geis upon himself or herself or can accept one placed by others. Authority figures can place geasa on underlings without their consent, but one may decline geasa placed by social equals. Social inferiors may not place one under a geis. A slave or peasant lacks honor and therefore may not be placed under a geis, though they will sometimes mimic their betters and attempt to place geasa on one another. If this becomes known to the aristocrats, punishment will be swift and severe – the peasant must not mock the warrior.

Most geasa, however, are placed on men and women by the gods. This is done at birth, as part of the very nature of creation. No one can tell what these might be, and so it is necessary for the Druids to divine these geasa so that one will know what is forbidden. Most people never learn all of their geasa, and this eventually leads to their deaths whether they know it or not.

In Celtic legend, violation of geasa is a powerful driving force of heroic tales. Heroes are placed under a geis. Inevitably, the story leads them to some turning point in which they are forced to break a geis. Adventures and campaigns using this setting should always involve geasa. Since these are often laid down by the gods as part of the underlying fabric of the universe, it would be appropriate to impose geasa on characters and slowly reveal these to the players through divination or other means of discovery.

8
The Ascended

This chapter deals with the gods of the Celts – collectively known as the Ascended. Rules for the gods in your Celtic Age *campaign follow an overview of Celtic religious belief. Like the Romans, the Celts see their gods reflected in all aspects of life, and this allows both peoples to freely interchange their gods. Celtic deities like Epona garnered Roman worshippers, while Mercury, Jupiter Optimus Maximus and other Roman gods eventually found a home in Celtic belief. And like the Romans, the Celts believe that a heroic mortal can gain godhood through great deeds; thus, so can a character ascend to the Celtic pantheon. But only the greatest of heroes manage this transition.*

The Celtic Pantheon

The gods of the Celts are a powerful group, but they are not unified in their associations or their dealings with mortals. Unlike some pantheons, the Celtic gods are not all related through blood, affections, or any other means. Some of them share histories or are relatives, but others are diametrically opposed and hold no ties to the rest of the pantheon. Such a disparate group of divine powers would ordinarily make for a very confusing life, but, among Celts, independence is stressed over unity, and the people understand that the strengths of their gods as individuals is more important than that as a group.

The Celts view life as a continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. They see everything in the world moving within a great spiral of being. From the turn of seasons to the cycle of life and death, from the curl of a snail's shell to the widening bands within the heart of an oak tree, the world rotates and moves in a circle – ever changing, ever staying the same. The changing seasons announce the steps of the yearly dance and are welcomed with feast days and merrymaking to acknowledge and give thanks for the new growth, the new season, and the new turn of the year. Each movement of the cycle is revered and acknowledged, and the Celts live with each day marking a progress along a very simple, yet elaborate path of being.

This perception of life as an unfolding spiral is something that unfortunately also keeps them from knowing peace. They are a people accustomed to change, to battle, to strife, and to striving for something better. In each day, they push forward a little more, and they change their world. The distance between one year and the next can change a tribe's lifestyle or views quite drastically and lead it away from its allies or the customs of the past. To the Celts, this is a good thing, even if it eventually brings them farther apart from their neighbors. The druids say that if each man and woman does not consistently improve and achieve, something has stagnated and gone wrong with his or her personal journey through

the world. Through celebrating the changing tides of the year, the Celts gracefully take each step of the dance, led joyfully along by what the ancient star-watchers once called, "the music of what happens."

In Celtic perception, the gods are not the creators or origins of all life. They are instead the ancestors of the people, the chosen archetypes of all that is upon the mortal world. They are the divine powers, the connection between the mortal and immortal world, and the link of the spirits to the common reality of life. Celtic deities are worshipped tribally, with each tribe venerating the god it feels best suits their needs. Each tribe often has its own name for an individual god, creating a tremendous amount of variation on a relatively small number of actual divine beings. The gods don't seem to mind, and go by whichever name is most relevant to them or to the tribe to which they currently are paying attention. The deities aren't stodgy, and even the most lawful of them realizes that names are only monikers to make mortals more comfortable.

The gods are known collectively as the Everliving Ones because they know the secret of immortality. Once a year, they gather to hold the Feast of Ages. Those who take part in this ceremony never grow old, and never age. Thus, the gods are simply ancient heroes, ancestors, and revered individuals who have been granted the position of protector and archetype. They took part in the great feast and have become immortal bastions of civilization and Celtic tradition.

Each deity does not have a separate function entirely apart from the others, nor are they ordered in hierarchical arrangements based on importance and/or familial structures. Their duties often overlap, and the abilities and "portfolios" of the Celtic gods are often confused because the gods' natures drift between devotees. To one tribe, Epona may be a death-goddess, carrying the souls of the dead to the afterlife. In another, the Morrigan or Arawn holds full and complete sway over the land of the dead. Yet Celtic tribes do not see this as a paradox. To them, all gods have duties. They perform these duties in means that may be beyond human comprehension, and each of them has their own function.

The Celtic gods and goddesses often have familial links (as in the Greco-Roman pantheons), but this is not always the case, and there really is no one "set" of deities that are worshipped in larger areas since each tribe usually has its own gods and goddesses that might or might not share the same names and functions as those of their neighbors. Confusing the matter further are deific spirits of specific places and natural features. However, these spirits generally rank below the primary deities of the Celtic lands (the ones with the largest sway among most tribes).

Gods are not as removed from the mundane world as they are in other cultures. They can be injured and even killed by mortals, and they often join in on earthly quests, lending their aid or hampering the hero.

In the beginning, the megalithic people of the British Isles did not picture their deities in human form. Stones, rivers, oceans, mountains, and other physical and natural places were the souls of the gods, capable of all things supernatural. These were spirits, powerful ones, who deserved to be revered and worshipped. Gradually, they evolved and took on more responsibilities as the tribes of the Celtic lands grew and spread. Eventually, they were no longer tied to a place or a specific material origin. As the Romans began to

influence these newly-evolved human archetypes, the gods of the Celts began to take on more concrete form.

Celtic spirituality is one of the land and nature. The Celts and their priests show great reverence to nature spirits as part of their devotion to the world. These are the places that birthed the gods, both literally and metaphysically. An understanding and respect for the holy nature of the world around them put the Celts in tune with their own surroundings and the mythic backgrounds of nature. The Celts prefer natural to human-made, although they are not a primitive culture. They simply understand that nature has its own means of making tools and other useful items, and they believe they should respect such things when they are found. The presence of divine spirits within the land means it is holy and needs to be treated with reverence and respect. In their view, nothing is more sacrilegious than abusing nature.

The Celts have many myths and beliefs that center around the number three. The Morrigan, Danu, and Brigd are often seen as a single tri-faced goddess, and many of the legends of Celtic heroes involve three tests, three challenges, or three possible outcomes. Thus, it is only natural that they would ascribe the number three into the physical world, as well. For the Celts, nature involves three earthly realms: the land, the sea, and the sky. Each has a connection with the spiritual realm. The spirits of nature live within the land, the dead live in a paradise beyond (or, in some legends, beneath) the sea, and the sky is the home of the noblest and most powerful of gods.

Like humans, the gods are often fickle or mercurial. Their passions are aroused like normal human emotions, and they often exhibit irrational or impulsive behaviors. This, however, only makes them more like the people who worship them: hot-tempered and often violent when angered. The Celtic gods are capable of falling in love, becoming angry, acting petty and spiteful, as well as a host of other emotional outbursts. They are "human" in many senses of the word, and their motives and actions are very familiar.

The Cycle

The Celtic people are very concerned with the cycles of life, nature, and the seasons. Much of their divine mythology is based around them. The sequence of seasonal balance shows in the myth of the god, Arawn, and his journeys into and out of the underworld. Human lifespans are reflected in the triple goddesses such as Brigd, Danu and Morrigan (maiden, mother and crone), revering each aspect of an individual's life.

All Celts believe that their lives are granted to them by the god of the dead and that they are just part of an open cycle which will end in his realm once more. The gods, however, are outside this sequence; although they may once have been mortal heroes, now they have tasted of the food of the divine and are no longer vulnerable to natural death. This does not prevent them from having successions of their own caused by divine circumstance, which they must fulfill instead.

Heroes and Gods

There is little difference between a true god and a powerful hero. Those who dine at the Feast of Ages gain a year's worth of immortality. Heroic mortals who have summarily pleased the gods are often invited. Those who are gods have eaten the feast so many times that the gift of immortality has become a part of their nature. Such individuals are truly "gods," but each was once mortal. Thus great heroes of today may one day become deities themselves.

The Feast of Ages

The Feast of Ages is the annual ceremony where the gods come together to celebrate and to honor heroes. By dining at the feast, a character gains one year's worth of immortality. Those who participate often have the effects become permanent.

Mortal characters are sometimes asked to attend so that the gods may honor them for their heroism. To receive an invitation, a character must have achieved greatness for his or her deeds, be widely known throughout the land, or be powerful. GM's are encouraged to only extend invitations to characters above 10th Level whose adventures frequently have great significance. Remember: only the most heroic are honored with invitations to the Feast of Ages.

By eating at the feast, a character gains the Limited Immortality ability of the gods for one year. The character does not age, nor does he or she suffer any effects of age. Such a character is essentially timeless. He or she can be killed, but is not otherwise mortal. Spells and spell effects that would cause the character to age have no effect on him or her. Characters who dine at the feast six times in a row become permanently immortal and are transformed into Demigods.

The character is irrevocably changed by the experience, though. The mortal world is no longer quite so enchanting as it once was. The character can be motivated to go on quests and adventure when it is important, but the simpler motivations of adventure or even working on behalf of his or her tribe seem inconsequential. The character must make a Will Save at DC 25 to take an interest in such things, and, even if he or she does agree to undertake such missions, his or her heart is not really in it. Only the epic truly holds the character's interest any longer. If something more important comes along, the character will abandon the current quest in favor of it.

Consequently, not every hero that receives an invitation to the Feast of Ages accepts. The gods seek not only to honor such a character. They also are asking him or her to step out of the life he or she has known and into a larger world. Not everyone wishes to make that adjustment, and there is no shame in not doing so.

Anyone who is powerful and renowned in the Celtic lands, who has earned the name of hero, and whose deeds are well known may be asked to join the gods at their feast. Those who attend are never again the same, having seen the land and beauty of the gods. The world in which they grew up seems dull and mundane by comparison. They themselves are changed by eating the feast. Even if they only dine once and eventually age and die, they are not quite human ever again. It is not unknown for a hero to turn down an invitation to the Feast of Ages for fear that he or she will never again be content in the lands of mortals.

Tribal Interactions

The Celts value and prize diversity, but they keep their religion grounded in the unity of the natural world. Nature and the realities of touch and sight mean more to them than unquantifiable miracles or mysticism. These are the core values of the Celtic path. Different branches of the Celtic tree still have certain core values in common no matter to what god or gods they ascribe their belief. They have a hospitable, beautiful, nature-friendly spirituality that is comfortable accepting others of differing beliefs (for the most part) and is open to debate, argument, and good old-fashioned tests of spirit, which are pivotal in the relations between each tribe. Known as "games," they can be seen as a sort of one-upmanship competition between the gods through their mortal representatives.

Celtic Spirituality

Everyday spirituality is entwined with each aspect of Celtic life. Farming and fishing families live each day in close communion with the divine. Every god is known by name, and spoken to as a friend or neighbor. The people of the village ask the gods for protection and

influence over even the most simple and minor things like they might ask a companion to aid with a simple task. A complex and beautiful tapestry of daily and seasonal prayers, rituals and ceremonies is woven through their lives. Whether sowing seed, spinning wool, or milking cows, these country dwellers carry out every task in the spirit of prayer despite the poverty and hardships of subsistence living. The gods, their invisible protectors, are not merely to be found where the druids walk or in the great stone dolmen of the sacred places. Instead, they attend everyday life – in the kitchen, field, and barn. The Celts integrate spirit into every aspect of their daily lives – whether rising in the morning, doing chores and housework, hunting or making meals, or retiring at night – the belief that the gods are with them at all times fills the typical Celtic man or woman with gratitude, reverence, and awe, helping him or her to remember where they are within the cycle of the world. Each passing of the seasons brings a person closer to an understanding of his or her spirituality and to the gods.

The deep spiritual and religious beliefs of the Celtic people arise from experience, rather than out of the abstractions of theology or dogma. They have little respect for things they cannot see, hold, or touch, and the beliefs of those people of the world which are based purely on theoretical matters seem nonsensical. Their gods are tangible, believable, and very present in everyday life. A Celt seeks to encounter the sacred in his or her heart, not in some arcane philosophical or theological principles. To a Celtic cleric or druid, the gods and the spirits are not abstract principles, but living beings with which they forge a loving relationship.

The Men of the Woods

Many Celtic legends of the gods and their homes revolve around special places in the landscape which are gateways to the Otherworld. These portals can be entered in a state of trance or sleep. The gods live among humanity, yet apart – an oxymoron that encompasses many of the Celtic mysteries. The gods are with us, yet not here; they are born of humanity, yet they are divine. This duality symbolizes the cycle of the gods – the path chosen, leading in the ever-changing spiral, which in turn leads to the end of the world. Anyone can walk it. It only requires courage and wisdom, and it lingers in the world for all who seek it to one day find.

The sacred sites of the Celtic gods are not built or created like the temples of Rome. They are open places with great history imbedded into every rock and hillside. These are the birth sites of Celtic religion, the homes of the gods and the havens of the seers. They might be hills or burial-mounds known to be frequented by faeries or ancestral spirits. Sometimes they are riversides or on the sea since water leads down into the underworld. The sleeper usually experiences being taken to a magical land by a fairy woman who became his mistress and muse and bestows the gift of poetry and prophecy upon him. This is most likely to happen when the turning of the year from one season to another leaves the gates to the Otherworld ajar: at the holy days known as Beltane and Samhain, the threshold times of the year when veils are parted and the realm of the gods and spirits is open to mortal kind.

Holy Wells

Holy Wells have restorative properties. A character who bathes in one has a chance to heal and recover from illness. To do so, the character first entreats the gods for help by making a Charisma check at DC 20. Then, he or she enters the water. If the Charisma check is successful, the character may choose to heal 3d8+5 points of damage or benefit from the effects of a Remove Disease spell. If the check fails, the character receives no benefit beyond feeling renewed.

It is customary to leave a gift for the gods if healing occurs. Failure to do so results in the ingrate's suffering the effects of a Bestow Curse spell 1d6 days afterwards. Prior to the curse being laid on the character, he or she may make up for the slight by performing some other action that pleases the gods.

Advice on future decisions is also attainable at these sites. A character who first bathes in the waters and then lays down to sleep next to them, benefits from either a vision of the future or gains advice on a difficult decision. Characters who receive the latter gift may ask the GM for advice on any matter. The game master will provide helpful information, but will not necessarily tell the player what he or she should do.

Finally, drinking the water of a Holy Well from the skull of a great foe on the Feast of Samhain makes it possible to contact the dead. The character makes a Charisma check at DC 20 after having performed the ritual. If successful, he or she can make contact with the dead, seeking their advice and information. On a failed check, the dead come to the character, but he or she can make no sense of what they tell him or her. During contact, the character must make a separate Will Save at DC 15. If this is failed, Arawn takes notice of the conversation. He will then seek to slay the character for learning the secrets of the dead before crossing over. How he chooses to do this is at the discretion of the GM, but many who have crossed the death lord have found themselves hunted by Devil's Dandy Dogs (see chapter 12).

In Ireland, people who frequently visit such places are known as *geilt,* meaning "wild." They have been too long in the land of the gods, eaten of the Feast of Ages, and lost their place in the cycle. Instead of following the path through to the end, they have become lost upon it and can never find their way back. There are dangers in knowing truths, and these *geilt* are proof that the gods are exactly that: powers beyond the ken of mortals. These individuals, who are sometimes seen as prophets or oracles for their vision despite their lunacy, live as wild men in the ancient places. They forage for roots and watercress and live in complete kinship with the animals. Stuck half-way between the world of the gods and that of humanity, the *geilt* live without either, yet they are condemned to be a part of both. The crazy "wild men of the woods" literally live on the very threshold of the Otherworld, but, unlike the trained druids of the Celtic lands, they have no ability to close its gates at will.

The people of the Celtic villages nearby often leave out food and drink, particularly on holy days, for the *geilt* to feast upon. This is said to help them remember their mortal lives and perhaps return to their lost past. It also soothes fear and encourages the *geilt* to prophesy good things for the villages around them.

The world of the *geilt* is a world of precognition, and they are often sought out for their wisdom. Though they are quite mad and have little understanding of their own words, they can be incredibly accurate when revealing the mysteries of the future. However, like all gifts of the gods, the prophecies of the geilt are never one-sided. They come with a burden, and with a price, named by each *geilt* at the time they prophesy.

Holy Wells

Deep in the forests and among the high hills of the Celtic lands, there are literally thousands of artesian wells springing up from deep beneath the surface. People visit them for their traditional virtues of healing and divination, believing that they rise up from the footprints of the gods. If someone is too badly injured for the healers and druids to tend, the believer might drink or sometimes bathe in the ice-cold water, hoping to touch the Otherworld of the gods and gain some of their restorative powers. These wells are watched after by the druids as well as the occasional mad *geilt,* and they are revered as sacred sites to the gods.

In fact, the water of some holy wells has caused the restoration of many individuals. These miracles are the will of the gods, providing direct intervention into the holy cycle of life and death. Those who are revived by the wells often leave behind tokens of their gratitude – food, money, or other gifts made by their own hands. The wells become strange places within the woods like fairy shrines, littered with gifts and moss-covered gold.

Dreaming at holy wells is also used as a method of foretelling the future. It is a means of entering the Otherworld long enough to glimpse images of the future or of one's purpose. Those with difficult decisions to make will often travel to a well, bathe, and sleep on the mossy ground nearby in the hopes that they will receive a dream to guide them.

In Celtic mythology, the Well of Wisdom stands at the center of the Otherworld, the spiritual source of all. It is the river that feeds creativity, arts, and intelligence – the place where the Salmon of Knowledge spawns. The holy wells of the mortal world are simply tributaries, small offshoots of this sacred fountain. The healing and wisdom of the Otherworld comes through to the mortal plane in these holy sites, and those who travel to them seek both health and knowledge. On certain days, the Otherworld is closer, and if one drinks from the well on those days, the visions will be stronger or even granted permanently, such as those of druids and other ancient heroes.

Some of the darker beliefs of the Celts suggest that if a person drinks the water of a sacred well in a special cup made from the skull of a severed head on Samhain night, they can speak to the dead, creating a direct link to those who have passed beyond. This is dangerous, however, as those who perform such an action are treading directly on the power of Arawn, the Death-God, and his wrath is never suffered lightly.

Gods in the Game

The simple title, "Ascended," covers a great deal of things. These may include, but are not limited to: heroes who have begun the change into godhood, actual deities of the Celtic tribes, and unusual or unique creatures and humanoids of equivalent power to the Celtic gods. A creature or PC may gain this template under one of the following circumstances: when he, she, or it attends the Feast of Ages and eats the food of immortality; when he or she ascends into the ranks of Hero, and then into Lesser God and God; by being created, born, or transmuted into a unique creature of Celtic myth.

The Ascended are the "major players" of godhood in the lands of the Celtic tribes. They manipulate, sponsor, and patronize the tribal people in order to further their own, more expansive goals. Through this influence, the Ascended war upon each other or attempt to achieve large-scale projects that may change the Celtic lands forever.

A creature that gains this status is first given the basic Ascended template, that of Demigod status. From there, it may achieve the higher variants (Lesser and Greater God) with effort and through completing godly quests or achieving worshippers and followers. No matter what the person's or creature's original form was, his, her, or its physical appearance is altered to be more reflective of the primary qualities with which the new Ascended is associated. Thus, Gods of Love become more beautiful, while evildoers become more vicious and intimidating. The change enhances the Ascended's normal qualities, magnifying those which are iconic to the individual.

Ascended Template

"Ascended" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The original creature's type changes to "Ascended," and their natures and abilities are altered. The new form will use all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted below. There are three variants of the Celtic Ascended: Demigods/Heroes, Lesser Gods, and Greater Gods.

Hit Dice: Add a number of Hit Dice according to the following formula: 5d10 + base creature's Constitution Modifier (per Hit Die) for Demigods; 10d10 + the base creature's Constitution Modifier (per Hit Die) for Lesser Gods; 15d10 + the base creature's Constitution Modifier (per Hit Die) for Greater Gods. These are the total amounts for each variant, not the additions. A demigod with 5d10 + Con rising to Lesser God status only adds an additional 5d10 + Con to his or her already increased Hit Dice. In addition, the base creature receives the standard base Hit Points for class as applicable.

Speed: Same as the base creature.

AC: Lesser Gods receive a Natural AC Bonus of +6. For Greater Gods, the bonus is +12.

Attacks: Same as the base creature.

Damage: Same as the base creature.

Special Attacks: Same as the base creature.

Special Qualities: In addition to any Special Qualities the base creature had prior to ascension, it acquires the following:

Rapid Healing (Ex): Celtic Ascended heal at twice the normal rate.

Spell Resistance (Su): 10

Divine Magic (Sp): A Celtic deity may cast any of the spells of a Domain to which he or she grants Clerics access. Each spell may be cast once a day by Demigods/Heroes, three times a day by Lesser Gods, and five times a day by Greater Gods.

Further, the Ascended gain an aura of otherworldliness, an awe-filled presence that makes them outstanding even in a room filled with warriors and kings. This aura can be dampened, but it serves to differentiate them from the "normal" individual. It is known as the Mark of Glory, and even those heroes who only visit the Feast of Ages once are given this unique blessing.

Requirements for Ascension

In order for a mortal to rise through the ranks of godhood into the state of Greater God, he or she must perform a number of requirements and duties. First, the character must prove himself or herself as a mortal among the tribes of the Celts. After that, he or she continues for many countless years to expand the portfolio and increase the worshippers he or she has, rising slowly in power and prestige. This may also require great acts of strength, feats of courage and bravery, or the destruction of a powerful, divine enemy.

The first step – from mortal to demigod – is to achieve such feats of greatness and courage that the gods take notice. Cuchulainn and his battles against Maeve's armies is a good example, as are the deeds of Bran the Blessed. Noble acts, particularly those that affect an entire tribe or island, are worthy of the respect of the gods. Once a mortal has overcome some impassable obstacle, or bested some unique and mythical beast, he or she may be invited to the Feast of Ages. Those who participate in this celebration once gain the status of Hero. After a year, if the individual does not again join the Feast of Ages, all special abilities and powers diminish, and he or she becomes mortal again. If the character is invited and attends the Feast of Ages three times, he or she truly becomes a demigod among the Celts, and the character's place in the pantheon is assured.

Even if he or she never again attends the celebration of the gods, all powers and abilities of the new station are retained forever.

Once the character has ascended to the status of a Demigod, he or she is set apart from the common affairs of mortals. It becomes difficult to retain old friendships and alliances. Ascended characters often vanish for months or even years as the change comes upon them, altering their bodies and minds to conform to the pressures of the universe. At this time, a Hero must choose a portfolio – a position among the stars, complete with an understanding of the goals and ideals towards which he or she strives. After having come to terms with his or her new place in the universal cycle, the Hero often returns to look once more upon the mortal world with a sense of displacement and sorrow. He or she will never again be a true part of mortal society but can now can shape it and sense it in ways never before known.

Only after defeating a great enemy or bettering all of society in some great test may a Demigod become a Lesser God in the Celtic Pantheon. Once the individual has truly achieved some height of courage or broadened his or her portfolio through the defeat of another god, the death of a unique creature, or legendary accomplishment may he or she ascend again up the tier of godhood. To achieve this status, the individual must also have groups of worshippers fueling his or her power and spreading the tales of the Demigod's heroism. Upon ascension, these worshippers become his or her church, complete with clerics who are granted minor magical spells and abilities, and other benefits.

When a Celtic Lesser God wishes to ascend once more into Greater God status, he or she must challenge one of the pre-existing Greater Gods for his or her portfolio. Only by overcoming the other deity directly or through the decline of the older god's worshippers and the rise of the new church can Greater God status be transferred and achieved. The old regime must be toppled before a new one can begin. Such is the cycle of Celtic life: the old must make way for the new.

The Gods Themselves

Following are descriptions of the major gods of the pantheon.

Ascended Template (cont'd)

Limited Immortality (Ex): While under the effects of the Feast of Ages (one year), the creature does not age. Those who have eaten of the feast six times never age. They may however be killed. Heroes and Lesser Gods may be slain by mortals. Greater Gods can only be vanquished by other Ascended.

Eternal Knowledge (Ex): The gods are long-lived and, with thousands of years to learn and adapt, are not completely bound by the Skill Point system. Demigods/Heroes may use any Skill as though he or she had 8 Ranks. Lesser Gods have a minimum of 16 Ranks per Skill. For Greater Gods, the number of Ranks is 25.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows:

- For Heroes: +2 to all Abilities
- For Lesser Gods: +6 Strength and Constitution; +4 all other Abilities
- For Greater Gods: +10 Strength and Constitution; +8 to all other Abilities

Skills: Same as the base creature except as added by the Eternal Knowledge ability.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Alignment: Any.

Advancement: By Character Class.

Angus and Caer

Angus once dreamed of a beautiful young maiden. He fell in love with her despite only having seen her in a vision. He told his mother, and together they searched all of Ireland, but they could not locate her. Angus despaired of ever finding her.

At last, he consulted his father, Dagda, who guided him to a mysterious figure known as Bov, the Red, King of the Dananns. Bov took him to the Dragon's Mouth, and there the boyish god saw 150 women. He spotted his beloved among them immediately. Her name was Caer, and she was the daughter of Ethal and Anubal, making her a princess of the Dananns of Connact.

However, on the first day of November, she and all the other maidens would be transformed into swans. Bov told Angus that if he could identify Caer as a swan he could marry her. After the transformation, Angus went to the lakeside and called to his beloved. Despite having been changed into a swan, she came to him. They lived together for a year with her in swan form. When she was changed back, Dagda married them.

Angus Og

Angus's name can be directly translated as "young son," and, indeed, his place among the Celtic deities is one of youth, bright laughter, and beauty. Also known as "Angus the Young," he is the Irish god of love. He carries a gold harp that makes irresistibly sweet music. He was likely converted into the Roman god, Cupid, by Caesar's troops.

Angus has a *brugh* (fairy palace) on the banks of the Boyne. Four bright birds – his own kisses, given immortal form – always accompany him. He is the son of the Dagda and is said to be the fairest man ever known beneath the stars.

Angus Og has beautiful, long, golden hair and shining blue eyes that always seem on the verge of joining in on a good-natured laugh. He is wiry, slender but muscular, and his skin is as pure and as perfect as cream. His laugh is clear and good-humored, and everything he does and says seems to be the "perfect thing" at that time. Those who remain near Angus Og for too long will find themselves forgetting to eat or drink, simply wasting away in the sheer luxury of his presence.

Angus carries a spear given to him by his father and rarely uses any other weapon. He is not a fighter and prefers peace to war, but he will defend those he loves with feral passion and unquestioned loyalty. He spends his eternal days with his chosen companions – both mortal and immortal – and rarely thinks about the future or about responsibilities. He has no need for them, and does not often consider his place in the world.

Arawn

The Celtic concept of death differs greatly from that of most other religions. It most closely resembles the premise of death held by the Egyptians,

The Name of Death

The true name for the Celtic god of death is unknown, and many historians argue the proper designation for this deity. Some term him Sucellos, a figure seen with hammer in hand and a large dog by his side. Others believe that Sawan or Samhain is more appropriate, especially since the Feast of Samhain reveres the dead. Most historians agree, though, that the name, "Arawn" was commonly used throughout all the Celtic regions, and it is by that name that we refer to him here.

claiming that death is a transitory state from one world to another. The otherworld of the Celts is not a gloomy place of suffering but rather a bright world of light, happiness, and liberation. The sun is as much a god of that world as he is a primary force in the land of the living.

Arawn is the Welsh god of the underworld. A tale in the Mabinogion relates how he

Angus Og (20th Level Fili / 15th Level Sorcerer)

Size: Medium Lesser God

Hit Dice: 10d10 + 20d6 + 15d4 +315

Hit Points: 470

Initiative: +7 (Dex)

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 23 (+7 Dex, +6 Natural)

Attacks: Masterwork Spear +22/+17/+12/+7 melee (1d10 + 6) or Bow +23/+18/+13/+8 ranged (1d8)

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Adoration, Ainmed, Curse of Shame, Inspiration, Mocking, Spell-casting, Stunning Insult, Wound with Words

Special Qualities: Distant Satire, Enduring Nickname, Eternal Beauty, Encouraging Words, Fire Immunity, Written Satire

Saves: Fort +19, Ref +14, Will +16

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 25, Con 24, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 32

Skills: Animal Empathy +30, Balance +21, Bluff +40, Concentration +18, Climb +18, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +18, Gather Information +25, Handle Animal +18, Hide +21, Innuendo +31, Knowledge (Legends) +20, Listen +20, Move Silently +15, Perform +45, Pick Pocket +18, Scry +20, Sense Motive +35, Spot +23, Tumble +18

Feats: Alertness, Call of Nature's Fury, Celtic Spear Proficiency, Combat Reflexes, Craft Wondrous Item, Disguise, Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Climb), Skill Focus (Perform), Weapon Focus (Spear)

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Domains: Charm, Good, Protection

Adoration (Su): Those who behold Angus Og's true beauty (when the God of Love is sleeping or when he wishes to reveal his true form to those around him) are struck with an all-encompassing love for him. Those affected must make a Will Save (DC 35) or seek his adoration and love single-mindedly. These individuals will do anything for Angus, including risking or even offering their own lives to amuse him. These individuals forget all other concerns and abandon any other desires. For Gods, this affection lasts 1d10 days, but, for mortals, this love is consuming, and the individual affected will never love another again.

Inspiration (Sp): Angus Og has the ability to speak a Word of Inspiration much like the Word of Power spells. With but a word, he can cause anyone in earshot to become obsessed with a single project or goal he chooses. This mission can be something as simple as "forge a sword" to as complex as "conquer all of Britannia." The individual thus affected will think of nothing except accomplishing this goal, other than basic day-to-day survival matters. Those in hearing of this Word of Inspiration may make a Will Save to resist at DC 30.

Angus Og (20th Level Fili / 15th Level Sorcerer) (cont'd)

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/7/7/7/7/4):

0th – Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Disrupt Undead, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic

1st – Charm Person, Comprehend Languages, Magic Missile, Protection from Evil, Sleep

2nd – Blindness/Deafness, Blur, Knock, Levitate, Web

3rd – Fly, Lightning Bolt, Dispel Magic, Suggestion

4th – Bestow Curse, Dimension Door, Fire Shield, Lesser Geas

5th – Cone of Cold, Hold Monster, Nightmare, Wall of Force

6th – Analyze Dweomer, Chain Lightning, Geas

7th – Sequester, Insanity

persuaded the mortal Pwyll to trade places with him for the span of a year and a day, fulfilling the Celtic cycle. During this brief period, Pwyll defeated Arawn's rival for dominion of the underworld and stabilized his kingdom. Although Pwyll was tempted and seduced by Arawn's wife, he did not betray their friendship and refused her advances. After Arawn returned, Pwyll kept his honor and returned Arawn's kingdom to him better than Arawn had left it. The two became close friends, and Pwyll is welcome in the underworld.

Arawn appears as a gigantic human male with dark skin and black hair. His eyes are empty, solid black in color, without irises or whites. He carries a massive hunting spear that none other than he can lift or throw, and he is built very broadly, with thick muscles and a domineering stance. His face is stoic and seems almost emotionless.

Arawn speaks without voice, and his face never moves. Those with whom he chooses to interact hear the sound of his voice only within their minds. He can speak to an unlimited number of individuals at once with this power.

He rarely visits the mortal world, but when he does so it is always at night and always to hunt. When so engaged, those who join him are transformed into white hounds with red ears. These beasts attack and kill their chosen "prey" but are ethereal to any other being, and can only be heard.

In addition to these transformed beings are the separate Hounds of Arawn. The monsters, also known as Devil's Dandy Dogs, are cold, vicious hunters who have chased even the most elusive prey and brought it to their master's feet. They are capable of tracking their quarry through the planes of existence, and, once they have found the trail, they will never lose it. These gigantic hunting dogs are Arawn's pride and joy and are constant companions to him.

Balor

Balor, the King of the Fomorians, is the leader of a vicious, twisted race. He is the son of Buarainech and the husband of Cethlenn. Balor has only one eye, which he keeps closed. Anything at which he looks dies instantly, although Balor seems to perform well even while blinded. He is as capable with his eyes closed as any mortal warrior with both eyes open, and it is almost impossible to defeat him in tests of strength or cunning.

Long ago, when the Fomorians and the people of the Celtic lands fought, the Celts won only through trickery and intelligence. Balor was said to be undying, and his symbol was the ever-

Arawn, the Huntsman
(20th Level Fighter / 20th Level Ranger)

Size: Large Greater God

Hit Dice: 55d10 + 360

Hit Points: 549

Initiative: +11 (+7 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 33 (-1 Size, +7 Dex, +12 Natural, +5 Armor)

Attacks/Damage: Gargantuan Huntsman's Spear +54/+49/+44/+39/+34/+29/+24/+19 melee (1d6 +14); or Shortbow +47/+42/+37/+32/+27/+22/+17/+12 ranged (1d6)

Face/Reach: 10 feet by 10 feet / 20 feet

Special Attacks: Spell-like Abilities, Hunter of Souls, the Wild Call

Special Qualities: Animal Control, Animal Form, Cold Immunity, Death-Spell Immunity, Spell Resistance 10, Track

Saves: Fort +33, Ref +22, Will +19

Abilities: Str 39, Dex 24, Con 28, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 15

Skills Animal Empathy +40, Tracking +45, Spot +42, Wilderness Lore +45

Feats: Alertness, Behead, Blind-Fight, Celtic Spear Proficiency, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Extend Spell, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (Huntsman's Spear), Improved Critical (Shortbow), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Run, Sunder, Track, Trample, Weapon Focus (Huntsman's Spear), Weapon Focus (Shortbow), Weapon Specialization (Huntsman's Spear), Weapon Specialization (Shortbow)

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Domains: Animal, Death, Nature

Hunter of Souls (Su): Arawn has power over the souls of the living, and may hunt them as he chooses. He may institute this power over any living being who is not protected against Death Magic, whether that person is in his line of sight or not. Arawn simply needs to know the individual's name. To use this ability, Arawn sounds his horn, calling for a particular soul to bow to his will. The sound of the horn is only audible at the location where the individual is standing. The targeted character must make an immediate Fortitude Save at DC 35 or die. All those within 20 feet of the individual being thus harvested take 3d10 points of damage from the awesome power of Arawn's horn and must make a Fortitude Save at DC 30 to avoid being Deafened. The effects of Deafness wear off of the Ascended in 1d10 rounds. For mortals, the effect is permanent.

The Wild Call (Su): When Arawn is hunting on the mortal plane, any sentient mortals within 30 feet of his pack finds themselves drawn into the hunt. Those who hear the sound of the horn or who see the hunt in progression must make a Will Save at DC 18 or lose control of themselves and instinctively join the hunt. They will recover when the sun rises far from where the joined the hunt with no memories of the event other than instinctive, animal emotions.

Arawn, the Huntsman (20th Level Fighter / 20th Level Ranger) (cont'd)

Summon Undead (Su): Arawn can summon undead creatures at will. Arawn is the master of the dead, and these creatures are not simply random dead people: they will almost always be the ancestors, familiar friends, or other deceased souls relevant to those Arawn is fighting. It is more disturbing to see your dead father rise up to face you, and as such, all saves made versus these creatures' Fear-based effects are at -2. Treat these monsters as Wights.

Cold Immunity (Ex): Arawn suffers no damage from Cold.

burning sun. Before his glance, other gods shriveled and fell. Lugh, his son, seized an opportunity when Balor was sleeping, and hurled a great stone through Balor's eye, killing him. Afterwards, the Fomorians were routed, and the Celts were freed of a tyrannical god. However, Balor appears only to have died symbolically. He has appeared since – another sign that he is indeed undying.

He is a huge, disgusting-looking giant. His features are twisted by deformity and vice, and his body is pieced together from mismatched limbs of ungainly shapes and sizes. He moves fluidly, despite his handicaps, and is terrifying to witness in battle. He may be hideous to look upon, but he is ferocious, and his skill is unquestioned.

Balor's body is covered with lesions, foul-smelling pus, and bloody decay, but it is still stable and very strong. He is known for his victories over the Dagda, Lugh, and the Tuatha de Dannan, and he has never shirked from combat. He is the King of his people, and both Fomorians and other giants consider him to be a champion of their race.

Brigd

Brigd or Brigid, as she is popularly known throughout the lands of the Celts, is the daughter of Dagda. She is a poet and the goddess of inspiration and bardic tales. She has an exclusively female priesthood at Kildare, where they maintain her ever-burning sacred fire. Fili and other purveyors of entertainment and teaching name her as their patron, and she offers special protection for the young and the artistic.

Brigd is also the goddess of fire. A less commonly used name for her is Breo-saighead /Bree-a-shatheed, which translates into "Fiery Arrow of Power." She is a Celtic three-fold goddess. Known by many names, Brigd's three aspects are: Fire of Inspiration as patron of poetry, Fire of the Hearth as patron of healing and fertility, and the Fire of the Forge as patron of smithing and martial arts. Due to her Fire of Inspiration aspect and her connection to the apple and oak trees, Brigd is often also considered the patron of druids. Brigd's festival is Imbolc, celebrated on or around February 1 when she ushers Spring to the land with the warm fire of her presence.

In accordance with her status as the goddess of fire, Brigd is a fiery, tempestuous maiden with red hair and eyes. She stands taller than most men, with a stern demeanor and swift motions that at times cannot be seen by mortal eyes. She is tremendously beautiful, but there is no hint of softness to her: she is a warrior in every sense of the word, quite capable with weapons.

Brigd has stern features that can crack into a fun smile when she is exceptionally pleased. She prefers to work at her forge or travel through war and battlefields rather than spending time with her fellow gods, and, consequently, they rarely see her. She detests politics and emphasizes loyalty, arts, and wisdom. She also has a healthy respect for

those who can hold their own in combat. She commands her followers to tackle their own problems and is not known for intervening on a devotee's behalf except to level the ground if another god is interfering.

Cernunnos (The Horned God)

Commonly known throughout Wales as Herne, the Hunter (whose name is taken from the call of the mating stag), Cernunnnos is a deity intrinsically tied to the cycles of the Earth. He is also portrayed as the Horned God complete with the image of antlers on his head, long, curling hair, a beard, and sometimes holding a spear and shield.

Cernunnos is born at the winter solstice, marries the goddess at Beltane, and dies at the summer solstice. He alternates with the

Balor

Size: Huge Giant (Fomorian) / Greater God

Hit Dice: 15d10 + 17d8 + 320

Hit Points: 532

Initiative: +13 (Dex)

Speed: 50 feet

AC: 28 (-2 Size, +8 Dex, +12 Natural)

Attacks: Gargantuan Iron Club +22/+17/+12 melee (3d8d6+12) or Rocks +29/+24/+19 ranged (2d8+12)

Face/Reach: 10 feet by 10 feet / 15 feet

Special Attacks: Eye of Balor, Fomori Infection, Rock-Throwing, The Call of Balor

Special Qualities: Rock-Catching, Immunity to Mind-Affecting Spells

Saves Fort +26, Ref +18, Will +13

Abilities: Str 35, Dex 26, Con 30, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills Bluff +35, Climb +35, Swim +38

Feats: Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Sunder

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, War

Eye of Balor (Sp): If Balor ever opens his eye and looks upon a mortal, that individual will instantly die. The target character is allowed a Fortitude Save at DC 35 to resist this effect.

Fomori Infection (Ex): All those injured by a Fomorian have a chance of becoming one. The Fomorians often injure their opponents and leave them behind, hoping that their bodies will twist and their minds be driven to the madness of the Fomori Giants. Those who are affected by this sickness find themselves turning into Fomori – twisted creatures, half-human and half-animal, their bodies corrupted and covered with disfigurements and revolting lesions. Their minds, too, are tainted by this infection, twisted to evil with little thought of their pasts or their previous morality. All creatures injured in combat with Balor must make a Fortitude Save at DC 25. If they fail, they are infected, and will change into a Fomori within 5 hours of the attack.

The Call of Balor: Balor can corrupt any emotion, twisting it into its opposite. He uses this on his enemies in order to make them defend him and attack their allies, causing untold problems in the military structure of those who dare assault the King of the Fomorians. Many enemies have fallen to this power, slitting their own throats as a sign of their true and undying "love" (once hatred) for Balor. Those affected must see Balor's eye (though he does not necessarily have to see theirs) and resist with a Will Save (DC 30). In mortals, this effect is permanent. For gods, it lasts 1d10 turns.

Brigd (20th Level Fili / 16th Level Sorcerer)

Size: Medium Lesser God

Hit Dice: 10d10 + 20d6 + 16d4 + 230

Hit Points: 386

Initiative: +7 (Dex)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 23 (+7 Dex + 6 Natural)

Attacks: +31/+26/+21 melee Longsword (1d8+8)

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Ainmed, Curse of Shame, Mocking, Spell-casting, Stunning Insult, Turn Air, Earth, or Water Creatures 15 times per day, Wound with Words

Special Qualities: Acid Immunity, Distant Satire, Enduring Nickname, Encouraging Words, Fire Immunity, Major Immunities, Written Satire

Saves: Fort +22 Ref +19 Will +25

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 25, Con 20, Int 32, Wis 16, Cha 30

Skills: Balance +30, Bluff +30, Craft (Armormaking) +33, Craft (Metalworking) +33, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +33, Escape Artist +21, Hide +22, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (Arcana) +19, Knowledge (Poetry) +34, Listen +23, Profession (Musician) +38, Profession (Smithing) +34, Scry +19, Search +20, Spellcraft +23, Spot +43, Tumble +18, Use Magic Device +40

Feats: Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, Call of Nature's Fury, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Items, Combat Reflexes, Combat Casting, Dodge, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Forge Ring, Maximize Spell, Mobility, Silent Spell

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Domains: Chaos, Fire, War

Turn Air, Earth, or Fire Creatures (Sp): Brigd Turns such monsters as though they were Undead of the appropriate Hit Dice and she were a Cleric of 10th Level.

Major Immunities (Ex): Brigd is immune to the following effects: Ability damage, ability drain, acid, cold, death effects, disease, disintegration, electricity, energy drain, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, transmutation, imprisonment, banishment.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/6/6/6):

0th — Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation, Read Magic, Resistance.

1st — Charm Person, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Message, Sleep.

2nd — Blur, Knock, Levitate, Mirror Image, Web.

3rd — Blink, Fly, Hold Person, Lightning Bolt.

4th — Arcane Eye, Fire Trap, Wall of Fire, Fire Shield,.

5th — Cone of Cold, Seeming, Wall of Force, Wall of Stone.

goddess of the moon in ruling over life and death, continuing the cycle of death, rebirth, and reincarnation.

Cernunnos may appear as either a great white stag, or as a very pale, gaunt huntsman with antlers on his helm. He typically prefers his

animal appearance, rarely choosing human form. He is also the son of Dagda, and is kin to all the animals and creatures of the wild and the forest.

In his animal form, Cernunnos is far larger than any normal stag in the wood, and his bearing and pure white hide make him outstanding even among a herd of similar

Cernunnos, the Great Stag

Size: Large Outsider / Greater God

Hit Dice: 15d10 + 12d8 + 299

Hit Points: 377

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 60 feet

AC: 25 (-1 Size, +4 Dex, +12 Natural)

Attacks: Gore +11 melee (1d8+7), 2 Hooves +6 melee (1d8+4); or +5 Magic Longsword +23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+12)

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Chill Aura, Paralyzation, Ice Hooves

Special Qualities: Cold Immunity, Dream Walking, Regeneration 4

Saves: Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +13

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 19, Con 28, Int 17, Wis 20, Cha 17

Skills: Climb +25, Concentration +25, Handle Animal +45, Heal +25, Intuit Direction +25, Jump +30, Knowledge (Mysteries) +25, Listen +25, Move Silently +25, Search +25, Sense Motive +25, Spot +25

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Run, Spring Attack

Alignment: Neutral Good

Domains: Animal, Chaos, War

Chill Aura (Sp): Cernunnos may choose to radiate a 60-foot radius of utter cold. While this aura does not damage living things, it blackens foliage, curdles milk, and spoils food and drink. In addition, it ruins magic potions and reduces the effectiveness of magic items (other than weapons). Items must succeed at a Fortitude Save at DC 22 to be unaffected.

Paralyzation (Sp): When Cernunnos turns his pale gaze upon someone, the force of his wild, uncivilized presence behind his stare can hold an individual much like a terrified rabbit before a snake. This ability is a Gaze Attack, and those who are targeted by it are turned into living stone. The targeted individual may resist with a Will Save at DC 35.

Dream Walking (Su): Cernunnos may travel the world freely, moving through the dreams of mortals and stepping out wherever a living creature is sleeping. In this manner, he has instantaneous travel across the world, and even across planes, and may find any person he wishes (even if he has no previous knowledge of that individual). This ability is infallible; Cernunnos simply decides where (or to whom) he wishes to go, and then moves through the dream world to that location. He may also affect the minds and dreams of those who are sleeping, implanting subliminal messages or visions of his passing.

Ice Hooves (Su): A blow from Cernunnos's hooves freezes materials, causing 1d8 damage to all items. Metal armor will crack and become brittle, swords or weapons must resist breaking, and cloth or fragile materials will freeze and crumble away from the bitter cold.

Cold Immunity (Ex): Cernunnos suffers no damage from cold.

creatures. He has the capacity to speak, and the ability to understand nearly any language even when in the form of an animal.

As a man, Cernunnos appears as a pale-skinned, slightly gaunt hunter with a white fur cloak and a white steel helm with great antlers upon it. He is usually silent, preferring to listen rather than speak, but his wisdom is unquestioned when he does raise his voice among the gods.

Cernunnos prefers to be alone, among the animals, and he does not spend a great deal of time either with the other gods or with mortals. He is a loner, choosing to remain solitary within the Celtic highlands and hills. He is protective of the animals and woodlands under his care and will occasionally appear to ward them from great danger.

Dagda

Dagda is the god of the Earth, maker of treaties, and ruler over life and death. He is a master of magic, a fearsome warrior, and a skilled artisan. Dagda is the son of Danu, the goddess of nature, and is the father of Brigd and Angus Og. The Morrigan is his wife, with whom he mates once a year during the festival of the new seasons.

One of Dagda's epithets is "Ollathir," which is generally interpreted as meaning "All-Father." It can be traced to the Odin myth of Norse belief. His name can also be interpreted as "octus," or "the wise." He is a god both to the Celts and to the People of the Dana (the Tuatha de Dannan), also known as the "fairy folk," for whom is he father and chief. He loves knowledge and searches for it throughout the entire world, possibly providing a motivation for Celtic expansion.

Among his possessions are an enormous club that can both kill and restore mortals to life, a great cauldron, which is an inexhaustible source of food, and a tremendous golden harp capable of soothing any creature and of healing both the body and the spirit. This harp was once stolen by the Fomori, but was returned when Lugh defeated Balor and seized his throne. Although he is old, Dagda still rules the Celtic Pantheon, preparing them for the day when his son will take over.

Dagda is a fatherly man, middle-aged and tending toward the white hair and wrinkled skin of old age. He is still strong, and his fingers are spry, but he no longer seems to move as a he once did when he was a young warrior. He once had red hair, but now it is white, peppered with orange.

Dagda's fingers are exceptionally dexterous from many centuries of harp playing, and his voice is sonorous and deep. His presence is soothing and comforting – almost fatherly. All those in his presence find it hard to raise their voices to him and feel an instinctive need to seek his advice and make him proud.

Dana

Dana, or Danu as she is also known, is the mother of many of the gods, and, therefore, considerably powerful. She is associated with fertility, motherhood, and the Earth and therefore also with the crops and the land. In many Irish legends, Dana is seen as a "triple goddess," sharing her face and form with two other aspects, typically with Brigd (as the maiden, or younger phase), and Morrigan (the older, "crone" countenance). Regardless of this tri-form nature, Dana is an independent

Dagda (20th Level Celtic Druid / 15th Level Fighter)

Size: Medium Greater God

Hit Dice: 30d10 + 20d8 + 150

Hit Points: 434

Initiative: +10 (+6 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 28 (+6 Dex, +12 Natural)

Attacks: Scythe +38/+33/+28/+23/+18/+13 melee (2d4+9) melee or Throwing Spear +36/+31/+26/+21/+16/+11 ranged (1d8+8)

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Cause Peace, Seek Wisdom, Spell-Casting

Special Qualities: Acid Immunity, Dispel Evil 3/Day, Electricity Immunity, Fire Immunity, Magic Circle Against Evil 3/Day, Protection from Evil 3/Day, Remote Communication, Spell Resistance 20, Understanding

Saves: Fort +20, Ref +17, Will +30

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 23, Con 17, Int 24, Wisdom 37, Charisma 22

Skills: Alchemy +35, Appraise +30, Concentration +30, Craft +34, Decipher Scrit +34, Diplomacy +30, Disable Device +36, Gather Information +30, Heal +38, Knowledge (History) +27, Knowledge (Law) +30, Knowledge (Legends) +27, Knowledge (Lineages, Noble and Royal) +27, Knowledge (Religion) +27, Search +40, Sense Motive +37

Feats: Alertness, Behead, Blind-Fight, Celtic Spear Proficiency, Call of Nature's Fury, Combat Reflexes, Cleave, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Power Attack, Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (Scythe)

Alignment: Lawful Good

Domains: Earth, Knowledge, Protection

Cause Peace (Su): With a word and an act of will Dagda can cause all fighting in a location to cease. So long as he concentrates, no one can commit an act of violence, no swords can be raised, and no harm can come to those within the area. The range of this power is 300 yards. The Saving Throw to resist this ability is Will at DC 45. Dagda must concentrate to use this power, making a Full Round Action each round for which he wishes it to be in effect.

Remote Communication (Sp): With this ability, Dagda can read and enter any sentient being's mind, no matter where it is hidden within the world. Only other Ascended can resist this probe. The Will Save to do so is DC 16.

Seek Wisdom (Ex): Dagda keeps a record of all that has occurred since the dawn of time, held within the movements of the stars. If need be, he can refer to the stars themselves to find the solution to a problem, determine the veracity of a claim, or any number of other tasks. In short, there is no question he cannot answer, given enough time. The amount of time required is a function of the obscurity of the answer. Easy answers require only 1d10 rounds to uncover. Moderate questions require more research and take 1d10 hours. A difficult answer requires Dagda to search for 1d10 days. Finally, truly obscure knowledge can only be gleaned after 1d10 months of searching.

Immunities (Ex): Dagda suffers no damage from acid, electricity, or fire.

Spell-Casting (Sp): Dagda has access to all five Circles of Understanding as a Celtic Druid. He has 100 points of Understanding to power his spells.

Dana, the Mother (20th Level Celtic Druid)

Size: Medium Greater God

Hit Dice: 15d10 + 20d8 + 175

Hit Points: 248

Initiative: +10 (+6 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 28 (+6 Dex, +12 natural)

Attacks: Morningstar +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+3), Enchanted S hortbow: +21/+16/+11 ranged (1d6 and Sleep)

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Sleep, Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Aura of Comfort, Dispel Evil 3/Day, Magic Circle Against Evil 3/Day, Prophesy, Protection from Evil 3/Day, Restore Life, Understanding

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +14, Will +26

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 22, Con 19, Int 27, Wis 38, Cha 22

Skills: Animal Empathy +32,Handle Animal +28, Heal +40, Intimidate +30, Intuit Direction +27, Knowledge (Nature) +41, Listen +27, Spot +35, Wilderness Lore +31

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell, Track

Alignment: Neutral Good

Domains: Good, Knowledge, Protection

Aura of Comfort (Sp): All those within 60 feet of Dana when she activates this power find themselves comforted. Their sorrows are soothed, their wounds begin to heal as though they had Regeneration 3, and their cares slip away for as long as they are within Dana's presence. Affected creatures act as though caught within a Rainbow Pattern spell, only they will choose not to defend themselves against attack, so powerful is the comfort Dana gives. Once attacked, the effect is broken. Unwilling targets of this ability may attempt a Will Save at DC 35 to resist its effects.

Prophesy (Sp): Dana has the ability to foresee the future. She can use this power in both the long- and the short-term. When she chooses to use it in the former manner, it operates as though she had cast the Vision spell but without the experience cost. In the short-term, the ability can be employed in combat to give her insight into her opponent's net move. She may gain +20 to her next attack roll, +20 to her AC, or any combination thereof. The duration for this effect is 1 round. Using Prophesy is a Standard Action. Dana may use it three times per day.

Restore Life (Sp): Dana can resurrect the dead at will, although she will only do this in exceptional cases. She does not tread lightly against Arawn's domain and knows that although it is within her power, he will not look kindly on frequent uses of this ability to plunder his realm. This ability works the same as True Resurrection except that there is no time limit to how long the target creature has been dead.

Sleep (Su): Dana's arrows are enchanted to induce sleep in those they strike. Whenever a character is hit by her ranged bow attack, he or she must make a Fortitude Save at DC 18 or fall asleep for 1d4 hours.

Spell-casting (Sp): Dana can cast spells from all five Circles of Understanding. She has 100 points of Understanding to power them.

Epona (20th Level Rogue / 10th Level Fighter)

Size: Medium Greater God

Hit Dice: 25d10 + 20d6 + 225

Hit Points: 436

Initiative: +16 (+12 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 34 (+12 Dex, +12 Natural)

Attacks: Unarmed Strike +33/+28/+23/+18/+13 melee

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Cause Chaos, Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack +10d6

Special Qualities: Defensive Roll, Evasion, Good Journey, Horsebound, Improved Evasion, Slippery Mind, Uncanny Dodge(Dex Bonus to AC, Can't Be Flanked, +4 Against Traps)

Saves: Fort +21, Ref +26, Will +13

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 35, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 21

Skills: Escape Artist +28, Hide +45, Jump +26, Knowledge (Geography) +30, Move Silently +26, Pick Pocket +26, Ride +41

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Blind-Fight, Call of Nature's Fury, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Mobility, Run, Skill Focus (Open Lock), Skill Focus (Ride), Spring Attack, Track, Whirlwind Attack

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Domains: Animal, Chaos, Travel

Cause Chaos (Sp): With this ability, Epona can cause the minds of those around her to swell into an unrecoverable chaos, driving them mad with a full knowledge of the sheer instability of the world. Those who fail a Will Save at DC 30 are overwhelmed with chaos, their minds infinitely shattered, and will never be the same again. After this ability strikes them, they become nothing more than autistic, gibbering shells of themselves.

Good Journey (Sp): Epona has the ability to place a blessing upon those she favors. Once blessed with this ability, all travel times for the beneficiary are cut in half. The target will always find safe travel and will never be assaulted or otherwise molested while journeying through the world.

Horsebound (Su): All of Epona's skills increase by +10 if she is mounted upon a horse.

goddess, who is greatly respected in Celtic lore.

Dana is a powerful matriarchal deity very much connected to the concepts of home and hearth. She is the patron of mothers everywhere, both human and animal, and is revered by women as a savior-figure who will intervene on their behalf when they are endangered. She is known as the mother of the world, compassionate and gentle but severe when angered, and capable of fierce guardianship of the innocent or the young.

Dana is crafty and uses any means necessary to learn her foes' secrets for later exploitation, but she is also forgiving and can see the truth within a person's heart. She is slightly rounded but still beautiful, with an air of friendship and comfort about her. Her hair is brownish-red, the color of mahogany, and her green eyes are friendly and laughing. She rarely carries a weapon, relying on her peaceful abilities and spells to protect her. Because Dagda is her son (and also, in her triple-goddess form as Brigd, her father), she has the capability to summon him in her defense if necessary. If she does so, he will arrive in 1d6 rounds.

Llyr (18th Level Coraiocht /12th Level Celtic Druid)

Size: Medium Greater God

Hit Dice: 25d10 + 12d8 + 120

Hit Points: 349

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet, 90 feet Swimming

AC: 25 (+3 Dex, +12 Natural)

Attacks: Unarmed Strike +49/+41/+33/+25/+17/+11 melee (1d12+9)

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Ceann Block, Comhraiceor Bata, Drown Deep, Flying Mare, Forgotten, Spell-casting, Stunning Attack, Tidal Strength

Special Qualities: Fire Immunity, Venom Immunity, Understanding

Saves: Fort +21, Ref +15, Will +22

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 31, Wis 22, Cha 18

Skills: Animal Empathy +34, Bluff +47, Escape Artist +34, Hide +31, Intuit Direction +32, Jump +30, Scry +26, Search +30, Swim +40, Wilderness Lore +36

Feats: Alertness, Call of Nature's Fury (x3), Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (Unarmed Strike), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Whirlwind Attack

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Domains: Animal, Law, Water

Drown Deep (Sp): Llyr has the ability to command the tides to usurp breath from any individual within 120 feet. With a simple gesture, the waters of the deep sea swell within the lungs of those he chooses, drowning them as certainly as if they were plunged within the depths of a watery abyss. All those targeted must make a Fortitude Save at DC 20 to cough up the water. Those that fail are reduced to 0 Hit Points and are Disabled, per the rules for Drowning. The following round, affected characters are reduced to -1 Hit Points and begin dying. The round after they are dead. Llyr can reverse this effect at any time before it is too late.

Forgotten (Sp): Llyr can withdraw a single fact from an individual's mind. When this information is removed, it simply no longer exists – the individual will retroactively make up new reasons for all his or her previous actions, creating an entirely new reality within his or her mind. For example, if Llyr removed the memory of a person's wife, the man would no longer remember anything that had to do with her: meeting her, their love, their marriage – all of it would be erased. The individual would then "make up" memories to supplant the loss. This power can be extremely devastating since it can result in complete personality changes (if an evil man never met his redeemer, for example). The DC to resist this effect is 25, and it is a Will Saving Throw.

Epona

Epona, also known as Rhiannon, is the Celtic horse goddess. Her authority extends even beyond death, accompanying the soul on its final journey. She is worshipped throughout Gaul and as far as the Danube and Rome. Her cult will eventually be adopted by the Roman army and spread wherever they go. Among the Gallic Celts, she is worshipped as goddess of horses, travel, and, to an extent, springs and rivers.

Epona is a beautiful woman, comely and athletic, with a dark tan and the appearance of

someone who spends a great deal of time outside. All animals love her and will come to her aid instantly if she is in need. Her hair is dark, and her eyes are brown. She appears as a young maiden.

She is a free spirit who values liberty and open spaces. She has traveled throughout the world and knows geography and the current political climate of many of the nations surrounding the Celtic homelands. Of all the gods, she is the one most likely to know of invasion before it happens. Some see Epona as a messenger, but she is far more: she is a traveler in love with the winding road.

Llyr

Llyr, or Lir, is the Celtic god of the sea, a powerful but generally benevolent deity of travel, fishing, and the ocean. He is a cyclical deity, changing from old to young as the year progresses and altering his form as he pleases. He appears in two distinct forms in most legends. First, he is the sea – a vast, impersonal presence. Second, he appears as an invisible man living on the tides and seeking his lost children.

One popular legend of Llyr is the story of his daughters. Llyr chose to marry a mortal woman, Eve, by whom he had three children. When she died, he married her sorcerous sister, Eva. Unfortunately, Eva became jealous of Llyr's offspring and lured them to a lake, where she used her magic to transform them into swans. The children were thus forced to spend three hundred years each at three different locations. When finally freed, they were so old that they died soon afterward.

Llyr is a workman who has become a king, but he still retains the dignity and sensibility of his previous profession. He is a family man, and his wife and children are all minor ocean deities. He is a compassionate and understanding individual, who has taken the responsibility of his position and stature with a kind hand. He is rarely angered, and, even when he is, it requires a great deal to cause him to override his sensible judgment and act out of emotion. Although his feelings have great depth, he is fully capable of removing his emotion from his decisions and acting purely in the best interest, the common good, or the cause of law.

Lugh

Also known as Lug-dunum or Lugos, Lugh is the god of light, a sun deity, and a force of creativity and strength. Balor is Lugh's

Llyr (18th Level Coraiocht / 12th Level Celtic Druid) (cont'd)

Tidal Strength (Sp): At will, Llyr can raise his strength to 38 for a duration of no more than 10 rounds. After using this ability, his Strength score immediately drops to 18 for an equal number of rounds. This power cannot be used Llyr is weakened from the recession of his Strength.

Fire Immunity (Ex): Llyr suffers no damage from fire.

Venom Immunity (Ex): Llyr suffers no damage from venoms, poisons, or other toxins.

Spell-Casting (Sp): Llyr has access to spells of the Fourth Circle. He has 60 points of Understanding to cast these spells.

Horse of Mananan: This famous steed belongs to Llyr and has the ability to traverse both land and sea, arriving anywhere in the world within one day. It stands taller than any normal horse, with a hide that is a deep blue-grey like the rolling of the ocean during a storm. The horse is intelligent.

Lugh (19th Level Fighter / 19th Level Fili)

Size: Medium Greater God

Hit Dice: 34d10 + 19d6 + 424

Hit Points: 808

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 30 (+ 4 Dex, +4 Chain Shirt, +12 natural)

Attacks: Enchanted Greatsword (+5 Wounding and Flaming) +42/+37/+32/+27/+22/+17/+12 melee (1d8+12+1d6 Fire); +3 Enchanted Shortbow +40/+35/ +30/ +25/+20/+15 ranged (1d6+5)

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Ainmed, Curse of Shame, Light of the Sun's Wrath, Mocking, Stunning Insult, Vision of the Sun, Wound with Words

Special Qualities: Distant Satire, Encouraging Words, Enduring Nickname, Immunity to Charm, Enchantment, Sleep, and Fire, Spell Resistance 5, Written Satire

Saves: Fort +32, Ref +18, Will +27

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 19, Con 27, Int 17, Wis 26, Cha 29

Skills: Bluff +28, Climb +32, Handle Animal +26, Knowledge (History) +34, Perform +46, Profession (Smithing) +26, Ride +36

Feats: Alertness, Behead, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Far Shot, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (Greatsword), Improved Critical (Shortbow), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Perform), Sunder, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Shortbow)

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Domains: Good, Healing, Sun

Light of the Sun's Wrath (Sp): Lugh has the ability to summon pure sunlight. This ray effect springs from Lugh's hand or eyes in a cone measuring 60 feet long and 120 feet at the terminus. All those in the area of effect suffer 6d10 points of damage. A Reflex Save at DC 18 will halve it. Mortal creatures must make an additional Fortitude Save at DC 20 or be permanently blinded.

Vision of the Sun (Su): Lugh can literally see and hear anything transpiring under the sun. If it is done or said within sight of a ray of sunshine, Lugh knows about it. The only way to keep a secret from him is to do so in a light-proof room, at night, or deep underground.

Fire Immunity (Ex): Lugh suffers no damage from fire.

Magic Item – The Sword of Gorias: Fragarach, otherwise known as the Sword of Gorias, is Lugh's chosen weapon. Given to him by the people of Dana, the sword is a powerful weapon. It is intelligent, with similar goals and morals as Lugh, and the two work together almost as if the sword is an extension of Lugh's personality. Fragrach (Int: 15, Wis 14; Capable of speech. Primary abilities: Shield on wielder, Feeblemind by touch, True Seeing while held and unsheathed) is a +5 sword of Wounding and is a Flaming weapon.

grandfather. Lugh is a warrior god, strong and bold, whose armies are as numerous and blazing as the light of the sun at noon. His festival is held in early July at the height of summer when the sun is at its peak.

Lugh, is a brilliant presence within the heavens, but he is also born of the powers of darkness and is prone to great rages. He is known by many as Lugh of the Long Arm. He was responsible for the slaying of the Fomorians and the overthrow of their king, Balor, and he is given credit for the freedom of the Celtic people. He is a kindly god, though prone to anger when provoked, and he is very protective of craftsmen, Fili, and other artists. He is the father of the hero, Cuchulainn, and known to be one of the finest warriors in the godly realms.

The Morrigan (20th Level Sorcerer / 14th Level Rogue)

Size: Large Greater God

Hit Dice: 15d10 + 20d4 + 14d6 + 294

Hit Points: 509

Initiative: +13 (+9 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 30 (-1 Size, +9 Dex, +12 Natural)

Attacks: +32/+27/+22/+17 melee or +29/+24/+19/+14 ranged

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Cloak of Death, Crippling Attack, Opportunist, Sneak Attack +7d6, Spell-casting

Special Qualities: Evasion, Sense All, Uncanny Dodge (Dex Bonus to AC, Can't Be Flanked, +2 Against Traps)

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +24, Will +23

Abilities: Str 35, Dex 28, Con 23, Int 21, Wis 25, Cha 19

Skills: Alchemy +35, Bluff +40, Concentration +33, Jump +31, Knowledge (Legends) +33, Knowledge (Mysteries) +27, Knowledge (Religion) +38, Listen +41, Move Silently +34, Spellcraft +45, Spot +27

Feats: Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Enlarge Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Spell Penetration, Track

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Domains: Death, Knowledge, Magic, War

Cloak of Death (Sp): The Morrigan can extend her cloak outward from her body, much like the wings of a great crow. When she does so, all fighting near her intensifies. All armor classes within a radius of 220 feet are halved. Attacks bonuses and damage within that area are doubled, and all failed Saving Throws against offensive magic result in immediate death. Ascended characters may make a Will Save to resist this effect at DC 35. Mortals do not get a Saving Throw.

Sense All (Su): Morrigan can see, hear, touch, and smell at a distance of 25 miles. As a Standard Action, she can perceive anything within 25 miles of her worshippers, holy sites, objects, or any location where one of her titles or her name was spoken within the last hour. She can extend her senses to up to thirty locations at once. She can block the sensory powers of any mortal from reaching her or any of her worshippers, holy sites, or holy objects.

The Morrigan (20th Level Sorcerer / 14th Level Rogue) (cont'd)

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/7/6/6/6/6/6):

0th — Arcane Mark, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Flare, Ghost Sound, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance

1st — Change Self, Chill Touch, Magic Missile, Obscuring Mist, Ventriloquism

2nd — Blindness/Deafness, Invisibility, Mirror Image, See Invisibility, Shatter

3rd — Fireball, Fly, Lightning Bolt, Slow

4th — Fire Trap, Improved Invisibility, Polymorph Other, Polymorph Self

5th — Animate Dead, Cloudkill, Cone of Cold, Teleport

6th — Chain Lightning, Eyebite, Mass Suggestion

7th — Delayed Blast Fireball, Power Word: Stun, Teleport without Error.

8th — Horrid Wilting, Incendiary Cloud, Power Word: Blind

9th — Meteor Swarm, Power Word: Kill, Shapechange

Lugh is the Celtic lord of every skill. He is patron of Lugodunum (Lyons) in Gaul. He and his nature goddess consort are worshipped during the 30-day Lugnassadh midsummer feast in Ireland. As the god of marriage, he and his wife are revered in the practice of fertility magic during this festival, ensuring the ripening of the crops and good harvest as well as the birth of many children in the coming year.

Lugh is typically seen as a beautiful human man with golden hair and a warrior's physique. Although he is often pictured in armor, he can also appear as the patron of craftsmen and artists, wearing an artist's smock or the garb and musical instrument of a bard. His eyes are golden, and hold the light of the sun within them. Few men can meet his gaze.

Lugh delights in visiting the mortal world and has taken numerous mortal wives. His famous son, Cuchulainn, is the result of one of these unions. Lugh treats his children well, and often imparts wisdom or advice to them in difficult situations. He is called the All-Craftsman for his ability to create items of great use and beauty; many of the magic items of the Celtic lands come from his hands.

The Morrigan

The Morrigan embodies all that is ferocious and terrifying about war. Her powers are great, and her anger is a force that even the gods fear. A dark deity, the Morrigan's aspect is that of an ancient crone with iron teeth and a great reaping scythe. She delights in visiting battles, watching from above in the form of a great crow. She is a violent goddess, one who causes strife and war but whose powers can also end it – though only at a great price.

The Morrigan's sister is Badb, known in Gaul as Cauth Bodva. Badb follows behind Morrigan on the battlefield, ensuring that death comes quickly after war.

The Morrigan is a goddess of battle, strife, and fertility. Her name translates as either "Great Queen" or "Phantom Queen," and both epithets are entirely appropriate. The Morrigan frequently appears in the guise of a hooded crow, cawing stories of death and decay to all those who will listen. She was instrumental in the defeat of the Fomorians, and is known to hate them with an unrivaled passion.

9
Celtic Characters

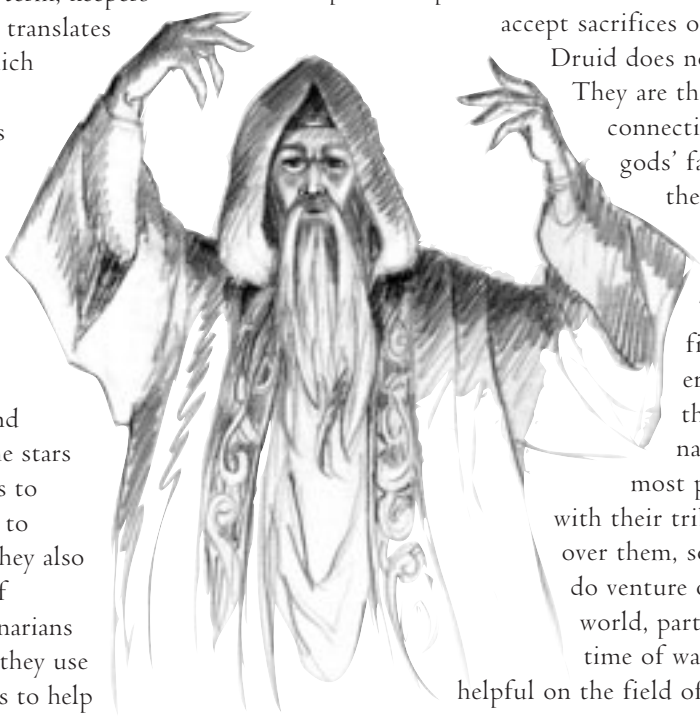
This chapter presents new Character Classes for the Celtic Age *setting. Some of these replace existing classes from the standard game. The following regular Classes from the standard game are not allowed in* Celtic Age: *Barbarian, Bard, Druid, Monk, Paladin, and Wizard. Bard and Druid are replaced by the Fili and Celtic Druid Classes below. Additionally, none of the Prestige Classes from the standard game are available in this setting. Finally, the Aristocrat NPC Class is only available to Roman characters. Noble Celts typically come from one of the other PC Character Classes. All of the material in this chapter is designated Open Game Content for license purposes.*

New Character Classes

The following classes are available to PC's starting their careers.

Celtic Druid

This class is based upon the culturally authentic version of the druids and replaces the Druid Class from the standard game. Druids are, for lack of a better term, keepers of wisdom. Their name translates as "oak knowledge," which implies the depth of a mature oak tree with its vast number of rings rather than a specialized knowledge of trees. More loosely, it can be translated as "highly wise."



Druids are the ultimate authority on planting and harvesting. They read the stars and the weather patterns to determine the best time to perform each activity. They also are experts in the care of animals, acting as veterinarians when necessary. Finally, they use their knowledge of herbs to help keep the other members of their tribe healthy, helping to proof them against disease and curing sickness when it is encountered.

This level of knowledge and wisdom helps to elevate one within the tribe. Druids frequently mediate disputes and act to see that the law is upheld. Those that do not do so are forbidden from making sacrifices to the gods. This is a powerful punishment because the gods will not accept sacrifices over which a Druid does not preside. They are the people's connection to the gods' favor, and it is therefore dangerous to cross Druids.

They make fine adventurers owing to their skill with nature. While most prefer to stay with their tribes and watch over them, some Druids do venture out into the world, particularly in time of war. They can be helpful on the field of battle, and

their knowledge of nature helps guide smaller groups reliably and safely to their destinations.

Hit Die: d8

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int Modifier

Class Skills: Alchemy, Animal Empathy, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Heal, Intimidate, Intuit Direction, Knowledge (Nature), Knowledge (Religion), Ride, Search, Wilderness Lore

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Druids are proficient with swords, spears, daggers, and shields.

Starting Gold: 2d4x10

Class Features: Celtic Druids gain the following Class Features at a rate indicated on Table 9-1.

Understanding (Ex): Druids are scholars, whose job it is to keep the knowledge of nature so that their tribes may benefit. How much they know is expressed in a unique character stat called Understanding, which is measured in points. A Celtic Druid begins his or her career with 5 points of Understanding. Each time he or she gains a Class Level as a Druid, the character garners another 5 points.

Understanding points are used to power spells. A spell has a cost in Understanding depending upon how powerful it is. The greater the spell,

Table 9-1: Celtic Druid Class Features

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Class Features
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	The First Circle, Rite of Sacrifice, Understanding
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Protection from Evil 2/Day
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	The Second Circle
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Protection from Evil 3/Day
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	
8	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	The Third Circle,Magic Circle Against Evil 2/Day
9	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6	
10	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	
11	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7	Magic Circle Against Evil 3/Day
12	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	The Fourth Circle
13	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	
14	+10/+5	+4	+4	+9	Dispel Evil 2/Day
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+9	
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	The Fifth Circle
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	Dispel Evil 3/Day
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11	
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	

the more Understanding it costs to cast. Understanding is renewed on a daily basis. Thus, a 2nd Level Celtic Druid has 10 Understanding points every day to power his or her spells. Once he or she has used up those points, the character cannot cast any more spells that day. Which spells the character casts is a function being able to afford the Understanding Cost. A character with 10 points could choose to cast the same 1-point spell 10 times in a day. He or she could also mix it up any way that does not exceed the maximum of 10 Understanding per day.

Celtic Druids do not memorize their spells. They have access to a certain group of them depending upon how much they know. The spells available to Celtic Druids are listed on Tables 9-2, 9-3, 9-4, 9-5, and 9-6. They are grouped into Circles of Understanding, with each Circle encompassing more powerful spells reflective of the Druid's greater understanding of the world around him or her. A character cannot cast a spell from a Circle to which he or she does not have access, regardless of how many points of Understanding he or she has.

Table 9-2: The First Circle of Understanding

Listed below are the spells available to Celtic Druids at the most basic level of understanding, and the amount of points they cost to cast.

Spell	Understanding Cost
Calm Animals	2
Cure Light Wounds	2
Cure Minor Wounds	1
Detect Animals or Plants	2
Detect Magic	1
Detect Poison	1
Detect Snares and Pits	2
Guidance	1
Invisibility to Animals	2
Know Direction	1
Magic Fang	2
Pass without Trace	2
Purify Food and Drink	1
Resistance	1

The First Circle (Sp): The character has the most basic understanding of nature and can work magic and science around that knowledge. Spells of the First Circle are comprised of 0- and 1st-Level Druid spells. The cost in Understanding to cast them is fairly low.

Rite of Sacrifice (Sp): Druids oversee the sacrifices made to the gods and use their knowledge of nature to help speed them to their intended recipients. Without a Druid's oversight, any sacrifice to the gods is done in vain. This ability confers the knowledge of the proper rituals necessary to make a sacrifice acceptable.

Protection from Evil (Sp): Druids help keep the world safe from evil. Their knowledge and magic helps to keep it away from those they protect. At 2nd Level, the Celtic Druid may cast the Divine Spell, Protection from Evil, twice a day. At 5th Level, this ability rises to three times a day.

The Second Circle (Sp): The Celtic Druid has increased his or her understanding of the world and can now work more complex magic. The spells of this Circle are 2nd and 3rd Level. They are more expensive to cast.

The Third Circle (Sp): Now the character really has begun to learn the secret workings of the Earth. He or she is capable of more spectacular and powerful magic to benefit the tribe. These spells are 4th and 5th Level. Casting them requires considerably more Understanding than spells of the First and Second Circles.

Magic Circle Against Evil (Sp): The Druid's powers against evil have increased. He or she can now cast Magic Circle Against Evil. At 8th Level, the spell may be cast twice per day. At 11th Level it increases to three times per day.

Table 9-3: The Second Circle of Understanding

Celtic Druids with access to the Second Circle may cast the spells listed below at the given cost of Understanding.

Spell	Understanding Cost
Animal Trance	4
Call Lightning	8
Contagion	8
Cure Moderate Wounds	8
Delay Poison	4
Diminish Plants	8
Neutralize Poison	8
Plant Growth	8
Poison	8
Protection from Elements	8
Remove Disease	8
Resist Elements	4
Soften Earth and Stone	4

The Fourth Circle (Sp): Celtic Druids with this level of understanding are truly powerful. They are rare individuals who truly understand the mystical forces of the natural cycle that bind everything together. The spells to which they have access are formidable, and they require a great deal of Understanding to cast. 6th- and 7th-Level Druid spells make up those available in the Fourth Circle.

Dispel Evil (Sp): Now the Celtic Druid has acquired great power over evil. He or she can cast Dispel Evil twice per day starting at 14th Level. At 17th Level, he or she can do so three times per day.

The Fifth Circle (Sp): The spells at this level are so powerful and require so much Understanding to cast that there are only four of them. Only the most learned and capable Druids ever reach this level of mastery. Consequently, only a character who has access to the Fifth Circle can be named the Supreme Druid.

Coraiocht

According to Cornish legends, Corinaeus, the first chief of Cornwall, defeated the giant, Gog Magog, by throwing him into the sea from Plymoth Hoe during a wrestling match. Wrestling is a traditional combat sport in the Celtic lands, and those who excel at its demanding arts are celebrated as heroes among the Celtic people. Celtic wrestling requires no weapons other than a single shillelagh (on occasion), and revolves around sheer strength, balance, and determination. Celtic wrestlers are brave men and women who are capable of tremendous feats of heroism, and they are often known by reputation throughout their lands.

Table 9-4: The Third Circle of Understanding

Celtic Druids with access to the Third Circle may cast the following spells at the listed costs.

Spell	Understanding Cost
Atonement	15
Awaken	25
Commune with Nature	15
Control Winds	25
Cure Critical Wounds	25
Cure Serious Wounds	15
Dispel Magic	15
Hallow	25
Ice Storm	25
Sleet Storm	15
Unhallow	25
Wall of Thorns	25

Learning the basic skills of Coraiocht is a simple task but mastering them is much more difficult. In order to wrestle, the individual must be properly outfitted and a circle must be prepared. Equipment is simple: shorts or a kilt and a strong canvas jacket. No boots or shoes are allowed, and many Coraiocht wrestlers can be identified by their lack of footgear even in normal travels.

The play area is any flat grassed area about the size of a tennis court. To be a formal bout, referees are required. In Cornish Wrestling these are known as "sticklers," and they are known for being very strict in judgment and application of rules. There are normally three sticklers, usually retired wrestlers who, as the name suggests, carry a stick each. A bout always commences with a handshake. The handshake communicates to each wrestler that the other is ready to begin fighting. Indeed, not even seconds elapse between the handshake and the first attempt at a hold or throw. From this position, each tries to trip, lift, or throw his opponent onto the ground in order to achieve a victory.

Coraiocht is not simply a contest or a sport. It is a combative style of fighting, and many contests are held to determine the best warriors in the Celtic lands. Coraiocht is used in combat, to break one's opponent, and those who practice it are feared on the battlefield, even without a weapon in their hands. For those who practice Coraiocht do not need weapons and can easily disarm their opponents, thus placing the foe at a disadvantage when fighting on the Coraiocht's ground.

As with other styles of wrestling, the aim in sporting Coraiocht and on the battlefield is to defeat your opponent. To do this in a friendly sporting event, you must either "back" your man or claim a win by points. A back is scored when a man has been picked up and dropped flat on his back so that at least three of his four "pins" hit the ground simultaneously. Pins are a man's shoulders and hips. A back wins a contest immediately, and the bout is over.

A Coraiocht wrestler scores points when his opponent's shoulder or hip hits the ground: one point for one pin and two points for two pins down. If, after a set time, no back has been scored, the sticklers confer and compare the number of pins that they have recorded. If there

Table 9-5: The Fourth Circle of Understanding

Spells and their associated costs are listed below for characters with access to this level of understanding.

Spell	Understanding Cost
Control Weather	50
Find the Path	35
Greater Dispelling	35
Harm	50
Heal	50
Ironwood	35
Legend Lore	35
True Seeing	50

Table 9-6: The Fifth Circle of Understanding

Celtic Druids that have attained this level of understanding may cast the following spells.

Spell	Understanding Cost
Earthquake	75
Foresight	75
Vision	75
Whirlwind	75

is a draw or no points at all have been scored, the bout will go to the wrestler whom the sticklers considered to be the most aggressive in his attempts.

Sporting matches begin in a standing position, toe to toe with the opponent. The wrestler puts his right arm over his opponent's shoulder and his left arm under his opponent's arm. Both wrestlers lock their hands behind their opponent's back. When the judge begins the match, the contestants try to make the other man fall. They are encouraged to use all sorts of tricks – tripping the opponent, stepping on his feet, pushing or pulling him, slinging him around, or lifting him.

Code of the Wrestler

Coraiocht wrestlers are expected to be paragons of society, good and true men with stalwart hearts. There is a code in wrestling society, and if a wrestler is known for breaking it, he will be severely disciplined by the others of this class whenever they meet. Breaking the Coraiocht code is an open invitation to a beating, and the other wrestlers, in order to save their reputations, will surely come to call. The code is as follows:

- Do not deride the aged when you have youth, the poor when you have wealth, the lame when you are swift, the blind though you have sight, the ill when you have strength, the dull when you are clever, or the foolish though you are with wisdom.
- Be not too wise, too foolish, too conceited, too diffident, too haughty, too humble, too talkative, too silent, too harsh, nor too feeble. For if you are too wise, they expect much. If you are foolish, you will be deceived. If you are too conceited, you will be vexing. Be too humble, and you will be without honor. Be too talkative, you will not be heard. If you are too silent, you will not be regarded at all. If you are too harsh, you will be broken. And if you are too feeble, you will be crushed.

Coraiocht wrestlers at war are fearsome. Their quick reflexes, coupled with their unique pugilistic style, can disarm and pin an opponent in just a few, quick moves. Their pins are capable of snapping a man's back or neck in a single throw if applied with the Coraiocht's full strength. In battle, they also use a short, thick club known as a bata or a shillelagh in order to beat their opponents to death or disarm longer weapons.

Hit Die: d10

Skill Points at 1st level: (2 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Skills: Climb, Escape Artist, Jump, Ride, Tumble, and Swim.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Coraiocht are proficient with clubs, bata, shillelagh, quarter staves, and daggers.

Starting Gold: 2d4 x 10

Class Features: Coraiocht gain their Class Features at a rate indicated on Table 9-7.

Bonus Feats (Ex): Coraiocht get a number of Bonus Feats, but they must choose these from the list shown on Table 9-8. Note that some of the Feats require prerequisites, and the character must meet all of these before he or she can take the Feat in question.

Unarmed Strike (Ex): Coraiocht are highly trained in fighting unarmed, giving them considerable advantages when doing so. They deal more damage than usual, as shown on the Table 9-7. A Coraiocht fighting unarmed gains the benefits of the Improved Unarmed Strike Feat, and thus does not provoke Attacks of Opportunity from armed opponents.

Stunning Attack (Ex): A Coraiocht has the ability to stun a creature damaged by his or her unarmed attacks. The Coraiocht can use this ability once per round, but no more than once per level per day. The character

Table 9-7: Coraiocht Class Features

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Class Features	Unarm. Attack	Unarm. Damage
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Unarmed Strike, Bonus Feat	+0	1d6
2	+2	+3	+1	+0	Bonus Feat	+1	1d6
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Stunning Attack	+2	1d6
4	+4	+4	+1	+1		+3	1d6
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Bonus Feat	+3	1d8
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Comhraiceor Bata	+4/+1	1d8
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2		+5/+2	1d8
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+6/+3	1d8
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3		+6/+3	1d8
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3		+7/+4/+1	1d10
11	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+8/+5/+2	1d10
12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Ceann Block	+9/+6/+3	1d10
13	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4		+9/+6/+3	1d10
14	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Bonus Feat	+10/+7/+4/+1	1d10
15	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5		+11/+8/+5/+2	1d10
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5		+12/+9/+6/+3	1d12
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Bonus Feat	+12/+9/+6/+3	1d12
18	+18/+13/3 +8/+	+11	+6	+6	Flying Mare	+13/+10/+7/+4/+1	1d12
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6		+14/+11/+8/+5/+2	1d12
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Bonus Feat	+15/+12/+9/+6/+3	1d12

must declare that he or she is using a stun attack before making the attack roll (thus, a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). A foe struck by the Coraiocht is forced to make a Fortitude Saving Throw (DC 10 + 1/2 the Coraiocht's level + Strength Modifier) in addition to receiving normal damage. If the Saving Throw fails, the opponent is stunned for 1 round. A stunned character can't act, and loses any Dexterity Bonus to AC, while attackers get a +1 bonus on attack rolls. Constructs, oozes, plants, undead, incorporeal creatures, and creatures immune to Critical Hits cannot be stunned by the Coraiocht's Stunning Attack.

Comhraiceoir Bata (Ex): The comhraiceor bata (pronounced cuhm- rayt-ceor bah-ta) is a style of shillelagh stick-fighting that places an emphasis on using the short club to disarm

Table 9-8: Coraiocht Bonus Feats

Coraiocht must choose from the following list when selecting one of their Bonus Feats as a Class Feature.

Ambidexterity	Improved Disarm
Blind-Fight	Improved Initiative
Cleave	Improved Trip
Combat Reflexes	Mobility
Deflect Arrows	Power Attack
Dodge	Spring Attack
Expertise	Stunning Fist
Improved Bull Rush	Sunder
Improved Critical	Whirlwind Attack

and injure opponents so that they are unable to use limbs (particularly arms, as many of the attacks with the shillelagh are designed to disable wrists and elbows). The Coraiocht does not provoke an Attack of Opportunity when attempting to Disarm an opponent, nor does the target get an attempt to Disarm the Coraiocht. Further, this attempt may be made as an additional Disarm attempt for the round if the Coraiocht also has the Improved Disarm Feat.

Ceann Block (Ex): The small staff known as the bata or shillelagh is known for its unique blocks and ability to break an opponent's weapon. At this level, the Coraiocht may attack an opponent's weapon, attempting to shatter it, rather than striking the foe. The attacking weapon may be of any size so long as the Coraiocht is using a fire-tempered shillelagh. With any other weapon, the Ceann Block may only be used against a weapon of equal or smaller size than the one the Coraiocht is holding. Doing so does not provoke an Attack of Opportunity from the opponent. The Coraiocht and the defender make opposed attack rolls. If the attacker wins this contest, a good blow has been landed against the defender's weapon or shield. Roll damage and deal it to the weapon or shield.

The Flying Mare (Ex): This throw is best done before proper grips have been taken. This is not a "shoulder throw" as found in other styles of wrestling, but is done by getting a shoulder under the other individual's solar plexus and then heaving the opponent over and behind. This will cause the target to land on his or her back, stunned and badly injured.

The Flying Mare may only be done as an Attack Action or a Charge Action, similar to a Bull Rush. First, the Coraiocht moves into the defender's space, provoking an Attack of Opportunity from each foe that threatens the character. Any Attack of Opportunity made by anyone other than the defender against the Coraiocht during a Flying Mare has a 50% chance of accidentally hitting the defender instead.

Secondly, both the Coraiocht and the defender make opposed Strength checks. The Coraiocht may add +4 to the roll if charging. The defender gets a +4 Stability Bonus if it is a creature with more than two legs. If the Coraiocht beats the defender, the target is flipped entirely over the character's back and onto the ground. The defender is Stunned for 3 rounds and receives double the normal damage that a Coraiocht would normally deal from an Unarmed Attack. A stunned character can't act and loses any Dexterity Bonus to AC. Attackers gain a +1 Circumstance Bonus to hit him or her.

Fili

Fili are poet-singers. Their legend forms the basis for the traditional fantasy bard character such as Lloyd Alexander's Fflewdder Fflamm. They replace the Bard Character Class from the standard game in the CELTIC AGE setting.

Fili, who are called Berach when female, are both treasured and feared. Their ability to compose songs and stories is beloved, and they have wickedly clever tongues and the talent for composing verse off the tops of their heads. However, such skill can be turned to insult, and Fili possess the ability to actually harm others with their words. The most devastating attack, known as *ainmed* or, "the Blemishing," is capable

of killing its target by causing him or her such shame and self-loathing that the character dies of grief. Some targets have been known to take their own lives rather than live with the shame of a biting satire aimed at them.

Fili make terrific adventurers because they need to travel to learn and create more great stories for them to tell, because they can use what they already know to benefit themselves and their companions, and because their satires can cause physical harm, which makes them effective combatants even if they are not masterful fighters. A Fili is a good addition to any adventuring party, but it is best to keep on his or her good side. Finding oneself the enemy of a talented Fili with a sharp tongue can be devastating.

Hit Die: d6

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int Modifier

Class Skills: Bluff, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Innuendo, Knowledge (Religion), Knowledge (Legends), Perform, Sense Motive

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Fili are proficient with swords, spears, and daggers.

Starting Gold: 3d4 x 10

Class Features: Fili gain the following Class Features at a rate indicated on Table 9-9.

Satire: The powers listed below are referred to as satires. Unless otherwise stated, any satire

Table 9-9: Fili Class Features

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Class Features
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Literacy Feat; Mocking
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Encouraging Words
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Encouraging Words
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Wound with Words
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Curse of Shame
8	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Encouraging Words
9	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	
10	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Stunning Insult
11	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Enduring Nickname
12	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	
13	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Distant Satire
14	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Written Satire
15	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	
16	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	
17	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Ainmed
18	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	
19	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	
20	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	

requires the character to make a Perform check. The DC for this check is usually 10 + the Charisma Modifier of the target. Exceptions are listed within the descriptions of the individual abilities. Most often, the target character is allowed a Will Save to resist the effects of the Fili's satire. Unless otherwise stated, a successful Saving Throw negates the ability. The DC for the Save is 10 + the Charisma Modifier of the Fili. Exceptions to this rule are noted in the individual descriptions. Finally, the range for all satires is five feet unless otherwise indicated.

Satire is enhanced by alcohol. If the Fili is drunk while using his or her powers, the character is granted a +1 Circumstance Bonus to the Performance check. If the target of the satire is intoxicated, the Fili gets a +2 Circumstance Bonus. These bonuses are cumulative with any others (including each other) that the character may receive.

Satire has no effect if the target cannot understand the shame, or even the language. The target of the satire must be Celtic and a human (one cannot rid the land of Romans or monsters with harsh words).

Mocking (Sp): The Fili has the ability to demoralize opponents through clever insults. To do so, the character makes a jibe, forcing the opponent to make a Will Save. If failed, the target suffers a –1 Morale Penalty to attack rolls and AC for 1d6 rounds + a number of rounds equal to the Fili's Class Level. Fili can perform this feat a number of times per day equal to the character's Charisma Modifier + 1 for every three Class Levels the Fili has.

Encouraging Words (Sp): This ability enables the character to inspire his or her friends to do better in battle. By singing their praises and instilling them with self-confidence, the Fili makes them temporarily more powerful. By succeeding at a Perform check of DC 15, the Fili may enhance the Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution of a target character. The subject gains 1d4+1 points in the chosen Ability for 10 rounds. Each time the Fili gains this Class Feature, he or she must choose which Ability he or she can affect. The character can perform this feat a number of times per day equal to his or her Charisma Modifier.

Wound with Words (Sp): The Fili's insults are now powerful enough to cause damage. By aiming a jibe at a target character, the Fili inflicts 1d8

Restricted Equipment

A lot of the gear available in a typical medieval fantasy game is inappropriate for the time period described in Celtic Age. When outfitting your character, you'll need to refer to the lists below to see which equipment is not available.

Simple Weapons – Melee
Gauntlet
Halfspear*
Mace, any
Punching Dagger
Spiked Gauntlet
Shortspear†

Simple Weapons – Ranged
Crossbow, any
Javelin#

Martial Weapons – Melee
Falchion
Flail, Heavy
Glaive
Greataxe
Guisarme
Halberd
Lance, any
Longspear
Pick, any
Ranseur
Rapier
Scimitar

Martial Weapons – Ranged
Longbow, Any
Shortbow, Composite

Exotic Weapons
All

+ his or her Charisma Modifier in damage. Targets may halve this damage upon a successful Will Save. This ability is usable once per day for every three Class Levels the character has.

Curse of Shame (Sp): This ability is similar to the Divine Spell, Bestow Curse. The character's satires have become strong enough to thoroughly demoralize a target. By firing off a satire at a chosen victim, the target suffers a –6 Morale Penalty to his or her Constitution, and a –4 Morale Penalty to attack rolls and Armor Class. This effect lasts for a number of hours equal to the Fili's Class Level, and it may be avoided on a successful Will Save. This ability may be used a number of times per day equal to the Fili's Charisma Modifier.

Stunning Insult (Sp): The character rips off a fiendishly good insult – one so cutting it stuns the target. The victim is held motionless for one round in shocked horror, and is treated as Flat-Footed for an additional two rounds thereafter. The target of this ability is allowed a Will Save at DC 13 + the Charisma Modifier of the Fili to avoid the effects of this terrible power. It may be used twice a day.

Enduring Nickname (Sp): Another insidious ability, Enduring Nickname enables the character to hang a derisive nickname on a target that the victim is unable to escape. This nickname inflicts a permanent loss of 2 points of Charisma and the loss of a Character Level. It also has the side effect of irritating the target whenever the name is uttered in his or her presence. The Perform check to pull this off is DC 20 + the Charisma Modifier of the victim. It may be resisted with a Will Save at DC 13 + the Charisma Modifier of the Fili performing the satire. If the Saving Throw is failed, the name sticks.

Restricted Equipment (cont'd)

Armor – Medium
Chainmail
Scale Mail

Armor – Heavy
All

Shields
Tower Shield

Extras
All

Adventuring Gear
Lantern, any
Portable Ram
Silk Rope
Spyglass

Class Tools and Skill Kits
Alchemist Lab
Disguise Kit
Hourglass
Spellbook
Water Clock

Clothing
Monk's Outfit

Mounts and Related Gear
Barding, any
Riding Dog
Horse (use the stats on page 158 in Chapter 11)
Military Saddle
Exotic Saddle, all
Wagon

* Use this weapon's stats for the Celtic Throwing Spear

† Use this weapon's stats for the Celtic Fighting Spear

\# Use this weapon's stats for the Roman Pilum

Distant Satire (Sp): The target of any of the Fili's satire attacks need not be present for them to be effective anymore. The range of the Fili's powers is 10 miles per Class Level. However, the DC for any required Perform checks is increased by 5, and the Saving Throw to resist them is reduced by 5 if the target is not present.

Written Satire (Sp): The pictographic power of words has a strong hold on illiterate people and the Celts are no exception. By writing his or her satire down, a Fili can increase the power it has over his or her victims. The penalties imposed by Mocking, Wound with Words, Stunning Insult, and Enduring Nickname are doubled. Effective distance for Distant Satire is doubled and the DC penalties are ignored. Curse of Shame has its duration doubled. The Fili must have the satire on hand and read from it for the enhancing powers to work. Doing so is a Full Round Action, and the character is treated as Flat-Footed while reading.

Ainmed (Sp): This is the most devastating power the Fili has at his or her command. It allows him or her to kill another person with satire. The character aims this powerful satire at his or her target, forcing the unfortunate to make a Will Save at DC 15 + the Charisma Modifier of the Fili attacking him or her. If the roll is failed, the character dies instantly, shamed to death by the power of the insulting parody of himself or herself. A Fili may only use this ability once per day.

Prestige Classes

Following are several Prestige Classes. As usual, they are only available to characters who can meet the prerequisites.

Fianna Eirinn

This warrior band protects the Irish borders from foreign invasion. They are immensely loyal to the king, to Ireland, and to each other. The Fianna Eirinn are fierce fighters and more than a measure for most foes of their homeland. Only the most capable are allowed to join them, and their tests weed out the less than perfect quickly and efficiently.

These characters never leave Ireland. Their job is to defend it from invasion. Thus, they make good characters if the campaign is set within the boundaries of their homeland but not otherwise. They can make fine opponents for those who would bring harm to the Irish throne, though.

To prepare themselves for combat, the Fianna Eirinn spend six months away from home, sleeping under the stars. This helps attune them to nature and toughens them against the elements so that they are more effective on the field of battle. They are allowed to marry, but they may not do so among themselves and their first loyalty must be to the throne, not their spouses.

Requirements: Dexterity 14+, Base Attack Bonus +8, Perform Skill: 8 Ranks, Wilderness Lore Skill: 4 Ranks, Loyalty to Ireland (see below)

Hit Die: d10

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int Modifier

Class Skills: Animal Empathy, Balance, Charioteering, Craft, Handle Animal, Heal, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (Nature), Perform, Tumble, Wilderness Lore

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Fianna Eirinn are proficient with all Simple and Martial Weapons, with Light Armor, and with Shields.

Special Restriction – Loyalty to Ireland: Fianna Eirinn must be devout denizens of Ireland, swearing to protect her at all costs. Nothing can come between the character and this devotion. If something does, the character loses the benefits of the Class and is no longer Fianna Eirinn.

Class Features: The Fianna Eirinn gain Class Features at a rate described on Table 9-10. These are detailed below.

Dispersing the Nine Spears (Ex): If the character has a shield, he or she may add +3 to his or her AC against all ranged attacks.

Weapon Finesse Feat: Fianna Eirinn gain this Feat for free at 2nd Level.

Woodland Stride (Ex): The character can move through natural thorns, briars, overgrowth, and other areas that usually impede movement at his or her natural speed. Those that are magically enchanted to slow movement still do so.

Song of Courage (Sp): By telling the tale of one his or her comrades' great adventures, the Fianna Eirinn can inspire the rest of the troop. All characters who hear the tale gain a +1 Bonus to Attack and Damage rolls.

Clarity of Purpose (Ex): The character has become devout enough in his or her defense of Ireland that he or she now garners a +2 Morale Bonus to all Saving Throw attempts.

Trackless Step (Ex): At this level, the character leaves no trail in the wilderness and cannot be tracked.

Legendary Devotion (Su): A Fianna Eirinn of this level is now capable of inspiring all those around him or her by the character's devotion to the throne. During battle, all characters within 10 feet of the Fianna Eirinn gain a +2 Morale Bonus to Attack and Damage rolls.

Cat's Grace (Sp): Once per day, the character can cast the Cat's Grace spell upon himself or herself. Note that this is not so much casting a spell as the character summoning up the best of himself or herself at a critical time.

Selfless Fury (Ex): The character can now fling himself or herself into battle with wild abandon with devastating results. The Fianna Eirinn may choose to subtract from his or her Armor Class, adding an equal value to all Attack rolls for that round. The limit of the number of points the character can subtract is equal to his or her Armor Class. This number can be adjusted up or down each round.

Devotion Beyond Death (Ex): Fianna Eirinn with this ability are very difficult to kill in combat. They are not Incapacitated when they reach 0 Hit Points but may fight on until reaching -20. A character at negative Hit Points becomes Incapacitated and begins dying as soon as the fight is over. Those that have -10 or fewer Hit Points when the battle ends die instantly upon conclusion of the fight.

Gaestatae

Another warrior society, the Gaestatae are a class of Celtic spear-masters. While trained in the sword like their kin, these individuals are much more effective with spears and shields. They have learned to imitate the Romans' formation fighting and work much better as a cohesive unit than most Celts.

The driving motivation for this is their mercenary status. Gaestatae serve whoever hires them. Unlike most soldiers-for-hire, they exhibit fanatical loyalty during their term of service. They will fight each other when commanded and have even been known to fight their own families in deadly combat if their paymasters call for it. Consequently, they are

Table 9-10: Fianna Eirinn Class Features

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Class Features
1	+1	+2	+2	+0	Dispersing the Nine Spears
2	+2	+3	+3	+0	Weapon Finesse Feat
3	+3	+3	+3	+1	Woodland Stride
4	+4	+4	+4	+1	Song of Courage
5	+5	+4	+4	+1	Clarity of Purpose
6	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	Trackless Step
7	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	Legendary Devotion
8	+8/+3	+6	+6	+2	Cat's Grace
9	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	Selfless Fury
10	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	Devotion Beyond Death

Table 9-11: Gaestatae Class Features

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Class Features
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Formation Fighting Feat
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Call of Nature's Fury Feat
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus Feat
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Stand Firm
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Bonus Feat
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Devout Discipline
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Wall of Spears
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Bonus Feat
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Flight of Wooden Doom

paid very well. Most Gaestatae can retire at any time on their earnings.

Gaestatae organize themselves into small bands that eschew individual glory. They work as a unit and bind themselves together so as to be a more effective fighting force. They do not take heads and receive no Power (see Chapter 10) for any opponents decapitated in combat. Such behavior emphasizes the individual, and this is anathema to the Gaestatae.

Requirements: Base Attack Bonus +3, Forsake Clan (see below), Celtic Spear Proficiency Feat

Hit Die: d10

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int Modifier

Class Skills: Craft, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Jump

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Gaestatae are proficient with all spears, Light Armor, and Shields.

Special Restriction – Forsake Clan: Gaestatae must forswear their tribal and familial ties while they serve. Until they quit the band, their loyalty must be solely to the band and to its current master. This vow takes the form of a Moderate Geis (see page 147), wherein the character takes 20 points of damage if it is broken. Assuming he or she survives, such breaking of faith usually results in the expulsion of the character from the band. Additionally, he or she will be unable to join any other Gaestatae bands that learn of the breach, to say nothing of the shame of breaking a Geis.

Class Features: The Gaestatae gain Class Features at a rate described on Table 9-11. These are detailed below.

Formation Fighting (Ex): Gaestatae receive the Formation Fighting Feat even though they are not Roman. Their discipline and training allows them to benefit from its effects.

Call of Nature's Fury (Ex): The character gains this Feat for free. It can be taken multiple times, so its effects are cumulative with any previous incarnations of the Feat the character has.

Stand Firm (Ex): The character has become very disciplined with his or her spear. The Gaestatae may now double the Critical Threat Range for his or her weapon when readying it against a Charge.

Devout Discipline (Ex): Gaestatae who reach this level of dedication benefit from a +2 Class Bonus to Will Saves.

Wall of Spears (Ex): Gaestatae of this level are

extremely dangerous when fighting in a formation. Not only do they gain the benefits of the formation (+1 Attack Rolls, +3 to AC), they can inflict more damage on those foolish enough to charge them. When readying his or her spear against a charge while in formation, the character gains an extra Attack of Opportunity against all creatures entering his or her Threat Range. Further, the character has a +2 Synergy Bonus to hit all opponents attacking the formation and an additional +3 Synergy Bonus to damage. The Gaestatae simply is able to react well enough to find the foe's weaknesses or to direct him or her onto the spears of the character's mates.

Flight of Wooden Doom (Ex): The character has become so proficient with the spear that all attacks made with it double the normal Critical Threat Range including ranged attacks.

Wild Women

These legendary warriors serve the Druids as bodyguards, an organized fighting force, and special agents. They swear to give their lives to their masters and to never be taken alive. Thus, they will do anything the Druids command them to do – no matter how suicidal – and they will stab themselves to death rather than be captured.

Wild Women are savage in battle. They work themselves into a frenzy and then attack with reckless abandon, showing no mercy to their opponents. While this sometimes leaves them open to counterattack, fighting one of these women is not a job any sane warrior should relish.

In addition to their devotion to the Druids and their savagery in battle, Wild Women are expected to be well-educated. They must understand the basics of Druidism and be knowledgeable of the poetry of their people. In all, they are a very well-rounded class of warriors.

Requirements: Female, Base Attack Bonus +3, Forsake Clan (see below), Celtic Spear Proficiency Feat

Hit Die: d12

Skill Points per Level: 4 + Int Modifier

Class Skills: Craft, Handle Animal, Heal, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (Nature), Wilderness Lore

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Wild Women are proficient with all spears, Light and Medium Armor, and Shields.

Special Restriction – Forsake Clan: Wild Women must forswear their tribal and familial ties while they serve. Until they quit the band, their loyalty must be solely to the druids and to their current master. This vow takes the form of a Moderate Geis (see page 147), wherein the character takes 20 points of damage if it is broken. Assuming she survives, such breaking of faith usually results in the expulsion of the character from the band.

Class Features: Wild Women gain Class Features at a rate shown on Table 9-12.

Fearless (Ex): Wild Women are absolutely fearless. They cannot be affected by Fear spells or Fear effects of any sort.

Rage (Ex): Wild Women enter a battle rage that makes them stronger, tougher, and more dangerous, but which, unfortunately also leaves them more open to attack. When the character enters this state of mind, she gains a +4 Bonus to her Strength, +4 to her Constitution, and a +2 Morale Bonus to any Will Saves she has to make. However, she suffers a -2 Circumstance Penalty to her Armor Class. The increase in Constitution grants the Wild Woman an additional 2 Hit Points per Level, but they are lost when she exits the Rage.

When Enraged, a Wild Woman cannot use any Skills or abilities that require concentration or patience. She's not really thinking about that. The only thing that matters is killing her enemies.

The Rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Wild Woman's (newly improved) Constitution Modifier +3. Afterwards, she is Fatigued. The number of times per day she can do this is a function of her Class Level.

Mad Rush (Ex): This is the ability of the Wild Woman to charge headlong into combat and wreak devastating havoc on her opponents in the initial sortie. To use this ability, the character must be at least 5 feet away from her target and use a Charge Action. Every character in the area into which she charges must make a Will Save at DC 10 + the Wild Woman's Charisma Bonus + her Class Level. If it is successful, the opponent may make an Attack of Opportunity against her. Otherwise, they stand there, struck dumb with horror as she crashes into their ranks. The Wild Woman gets a +4 Circumstance Bonus to her initial attack roll on the target and a +2 Bonus for the next two rounds owing to the chaos her attack caused. She also receives a +2 Circumstance Bonus to her damage for the first three rounds of her attack.

Initiate of the First Circle (Sp): The character has learned enough of the Druidic ways that she can now cast spells of the First Circle. She begins with 5 points of Understanding to power spells. Every level she gains in Wild Woman thereafter, she gets another 3 points of Understanding.

Song of Courage (Sp): By telling the tale of one her comrades' great adventures, the Wild Woman can inspire the rest of the troop. All characters who hear the tale gain a +1 Bonus to Attack and Damage rolls.

Initiate of the Second Circle (Sp): The character can now cast spells from the Second Circle of Understanding.

Table 9-12: Wild Women Class Features

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Class Features
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Fearless
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Rage 1/Day
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Mad Rush
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Bonus Feat
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Initiate of the First Circle
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+5	Rage 2/Day
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	Song of Courage
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+6	Bonus Feat
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+6	Rage 3/Day
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+7	Initiate of the Second Circle

10
New Rules for Celts

The different ways of the Celts also make them slightly different from the standard fantasy character. This chapter includes a number of additional rules specific to the Celtic Age *setting. There are new Feats and Skills as well as genre-specific material. A Celtic setting would not be complete without rules for the Celtic warrior's favorite occupations: heavy drinking, and chopping off the heads of defeated enemies. Bad things can result from drunkenness, but taking an enemy's head can gain a character added power. All of the information in this chapter is designated Open Game Content for license purposes.*

New Feats

Behead [General]

The character is capable of cutting off an opponent's head with a single stroke.

Prerequisites: Power Attack, Weapon Focus with a Slashing Weapon, Base Attack Bonus of +4

Benefit: Characters with this Feat are extremely dangerous opponents in a fight because they are skilled at decapitating their foes with a single stroke of their weapons. Whenever the character rolls a potential Critical Hit, he or she rolls again as usual to determine if the strike is indeed critical. If so, roll a third time. If the third result would also have resulted in a hit, the target of the strike is beheaded and dies instantly. This Feat is only usable with a weapon that does Slashing Damage, and it only works on creatures the same size or smaller than the character. Larger opponents and those that are immune to Critical Hits cannot be beheaded nor can creatures without a head.

Call of Nature's Fury [General]

Celts typically fight naked so that they can better connect themselves to the power of nature, bringing its terrifying wrath down on their enemies and wrapping themselves in its protective shell. Men paint themselves while women don't. Both are intended to make them stand out from their enemies and to frighten them. By stripping bare to fight, the character can gain the benefits of nature as his or her ally.

Prerequisites: Celtic (only Celts may take this Feat), Base Attack Bonus +5, Charisma 12+

Benefit: When fighting naked, the character gains a +2 Bonus that may be applied to attack rolls, damage rolls, or Armor Class. The bonus may be split among those attributes. The character must set the bonus at the beginning of the combat and cannot adjust it until the next fight.

Special: This Feat may be taken multiple times. Its effects are cumulative.

Celtic Spear Proficiency [General]

The character is familiar with the Celtic methods for fighting with spears.

Prerequisites: Celtic (only Celts may take this Feat)

Benefit: Characters with this feat gain the benefits and disadvantages of the Celtic spear-fighting style. The character may wield a Celtic Thrusting Spear normally in melee combat. He or she may also use a Celtic Throwing Spear in ranged combat. The character gets a +1 to his or her attack roll, while so doing, but the spear only has a Range Increment of 10 feet, owing to the flat trajectory of the throw.

Normal: A character without this Feat suffers a -4 penalty to Attack rolls when fighting with a Celtic Thrusting Spear or a Celtic Throwing Spear.

Divine Strike [General]

Characters with this Feat are capable of earning the help of the gods. The gods look favorably upon this person and invest his or her sword with some of their essence, making it temporarily a more effective weapon.

Prerequisites: Celtic (only Celts may take this Feat), Base Attack Bonus +5, Charisma 14+, Weapon Focus (sword) Feat, Wielding a Sword

Benefit: Once per day, the character can call upon the gods to enhance his or her sword. The character chooses one of two effects: the sword is enchanted for one round as though True Strike had been cast on it, or the next blow that the character lands is automatically a Critical Hit.

Formation Fighting [General]

The Romans discovered long ago, that fighting as a unit is more effective than fighting individually. They therefore developed weapons and armor to facilitate that strategy. Characters with this Feat are capable of fighting effectively in close quarters with their comrades, taking advantage of the formation.

Prerequisites: Only Greeks and Romans may take this Feat. Celts may not since fighting this way is antithetical to their way of life.

Benefit: A character with this Feat who fights in a formation gains a +1 to Attack Rolls and +3 to AC while closed in ranks. There must be at least five people in the formation for the character to gain this benefit.

Fighting Drunk [General]

The character is skilled at fighting while inebriated.

Benefit: A character with this Feat is accustomed to fighting drunk and can thus negate some of the penalties. The character only suffers half the usual penalties to attack rolls, damage rolls, and AC that would normally be imposed by his or her intoxication. The effects of this Feat are cumulative with High Tolerance (see below). For more information on being drunk see page 144.

High Tolerance [General]

Characters with this Feat have a high tolerance to alcohol and do not easily get drunk.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 Bonus to all Fortitude Saves to resist the effects of alcohol. This includes Saves against becoming drunk, against becoming sick, against passing out, and against alcohol poisoning. Additionally, the penalties imposed on the character while drunk are halved. For more information on being drunk, see page 144.

Table 10-1: Charioteering Skill Check DC's

Characters must make Charioteering checks under the following conditions:

Event	DC
Turning sharply at high speed	5 or 10
Driving over rough terrain	10
Jumping chariot over low obstacle	15
Passenger fighting from chariot	10
Driver fighting from moving chariot	15 (chariot may only move straight at current speed)

Literacy [General]

Not everyone knows how to read. Those with this Feat can do so, which can be a powerful advantage in an illiterate society.

Benefit: The character can read and write his or her native language in addition to speaking it. This feat can be taken multiple times. Each time, the character must specify a new language. Note that he or she must also take the Speak Language Skill if he or she wishes to speak it too. Likewise, a character can take Speak Language to know a foreign tongue without being able to read it if this Feat is not also taken.

Normal: All characters are presumed to be illiterate unless they take this Feat. Thus, reading is a rare skill.

Roman Spear Proficiency [General]

The character is skilled in the Roman style of spear-throwing.

Prerequisites: Roman (only a Roman character may take this Feat)

Benefit: When throwing a pilum, the character makes a normal attack roll, but the Range Increment is 30 feet. Note that pila do not make effective melee weapons, and the Romans do not train to fight with them in this fashion.

Normal: A character without this Feat suffers -4 penalty when attempting a Ranged Attack with a pilum.

Weapon-Catching [General]

The character may use his or her shield to disarm opponents.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 12+, Shield Proficiency

Benefit: Once per round, a character with this Feat may attempt to disarm his or her opponent. To do so, he or she must be wielding a wooden shield and must be able to make a Move-Equivalent Action. If the character's attacker misses with a slashing weapon, the character may make a Reflex Saving Throw. If it is successful, the weapon has embedded itself in the edge of the shield. By throwing the shield away, the character can disarm his or her attacker. Regardless of whether the attacker is disarmed, he or she is off balance and suffers a -1 Circumstance Penalty to attack rolls and AC, and a -4 penalty to Initiative in the round following a successful use of Weapon-Catching.

The DC for the Reflex Save is 10 + the opponent's Dexterity Modifier. Weapon-Catching does not provoke an Attack of Opportunity. If the attempt fails, the attacker cannot attempt to Disarm the character.

New Skills

Charioteering (Dex)

Characters with this Skill have the ability to drive a chariot under difficult circumstances such as combat. A DC is not required for normal driving but may be needed for extraordinary actions. Extraordinary actions and the DC to succeed at them are shown on Table 10-1.

Charioteering is a Class Skill for Celtic Druids, Fighters, and Rangers. It is a Cross-Class Skill for all others.

Composition (Wis)

This is the ability to compose epic poetry about one's adventures and, occasionally, those of others. The Skill works largely in support of the Perform Skill. A character with Composition may make a Skill check to enhance a Perform roll. The character rolls and consults Table 10-2. He or she then gets to apply the appropriate bonus to the Perform

Table 10-2: Composition Bonuses

To use the Composition Skill, a character makes a Skill check and compares the result to the table below. The bonus listed is applied to the character's Perform Skill check.

DC	Bonus
10	+1
15	+2
20	+3
25	+4
30	+5

check. Because it is associated with Perform and is usually done on the spot, a character may not Take 10 or Take 20 with Composition.

Composition is a Class Skill for Fili and Fianna Eirinn. It is a Cross-Class Skill for all others.

Alcohol

The Celts seem to enjoy drinking only a little less than fighting. They engage in the activity liberally, and the one often leads to the other.

Alcohol has a detrimental effect on the character, though. It both lowers his or her inhibitions, which often leads to antisocial behavior, and it impairs the character's ability to act effectively. When a character begins drinking, he or she takes the chance of getting drunk.

Getting Drunk

A character can have two drinks for free. That is, the first two alcoholic beverages consumed have no effect on him or her. For every drink after the second, he or she must make a Fortitude Saving Throw to avoid becoming drunk. The DC for this check is 10. However, the DC increases by 2 for each additional drink. So long as the Save is successful, the character remains sober. If the character is drinking wine instead of ale, the base DC is 15.

If it is failed the character becomes inebriated. He or she suffers 2 points of Temporary Ability Damage to all six Abilities. Additionally, any time the character is confronted or hears or sees something he or she doesn't like, a Will Save must be made to avoid "escalating" the situation. This doesn't mean a fight will break out right away. It only means a conflict will go to the next level. An insult becomes a bigger insult. A bigger insult becomes an argument. An argument becomes a fight. The GM determines what the next logical level is when the Will Save is failed.

Drunk characters continue to make Fortitude Saves each time they have another drink. Each time they fail, they suffer another 2 points of Ability Damage. A character's Ability Scores cannot drop below 1 in this fashion.

The Body's Way of Saying, "That's Enough."

A character that has failed five Fortitude Saves against becoming drunk must begin making an additional Fortitude Saving Throw to keep it down. The DC for this check is once again 10 + 2 for every drink the character has taken. This Save is made every time a Saving Throw to resist becoming drunker must be made, and, so long as it is successful, there are no additional ill effects. If it is ever failed, the character's body has had enough. He or she gets sick and begins expelling the contents of his or her stomach one round later. The character is now Nauseated. 10 minutes later, he or she Passes Out (see below).

Passing Out

A drunk character who has failed three Fortitude Saves against becoming drunk, must begin making an additional Fortitude Saving Throw to avoid Passing Out. The DC for this Save is 10 + 2 for every drink the character has taken. It is made with each additional drink, and, so long as it is made, there are no additional effects. If it is failed, the character loses consciousness and sleeps for 1d6+4 hours.

Alcohol Poisoning

A character who has three or more of his or her Abilities reduced to 1 by alcohol risks suffering from alcohol poisoning. He or she must make a Fortitude Save at DC 15. If it is failed the character takes 1d10 points of damage every hour. This continues until the character wakes up the following day. Thus, it is possible for alcohol-poisoned characters to die in their sleep. The Fortitude Save to resist poisoning is made for every drink the character consumes after three Ability scores reach 1. If five of the character's scores reach 1, he or she automatically suffers the effects of alcohol poisoning.

Recovering from Being Drunk

A character recovers 2 points to each Ability Score every hour after he or she stops drinking. When all of the character's scores have returned to their normal levels, he or she is sober. If the character goes to sleep or passes out, he or she awakes fully recovered. Characters suffering from alcohol poisoning recover at half this rate and are not automatically healed when they awake (though they do cease taking damage).

Hangovers

When a character wakes up after having been drunk, it is possible that he or she will be hung over. The character makes a Fortitude Save, the DC of which is 10 + the number of drinks the character had the night before (twice that number if the drink was wine or mead). If successful, he or she gets off without a hangover. If not, he or she has a blinding headache and a queasy stomach that inflicts a -2 Circumstance Penalty to all actions, AC, and Saving Throws for 1d4+1 hours.

Geasa

A geis (plural, "geasa") is a powerful oath. It is only undertaken with the highest seriousness. Swearing an oath is one thing. Accepting a geis is another.

A geis has magical properties. To break it almost always results in misfortune for the individual who does so. Because a Celt's greatest possession is his or her honor, few refuse to undertake one – it's a measure of the person's greatness that he or she will risk mystical retribution rather than break his or her word. Those that do break a geis are looked upon with no sympathy whatsoever. They dishonored themselves and got what they deserved.

The exact nature of a geis is dependent upon several factors. It may be entered into voluntarily by a character or imposed upon him or her by a superior. If not commanded by a lord, it may certainly be declined, but the person must then have a good reason or be deemed a coward. A character may also place a geis upon himself or herself without provocation. This is often done to demonstrate honor or to motivate oneself.

Geasa are divided into three basic classifications: Minor, Moderate, and Major. They are defined by the consequences of betrayal. Table 10-3 lists possible consequences for breaking a geis. The classification is determined by the Level of the character offering or imposing the geis. Characters of 1st through 7th Level may only create Minor

Table 10-3: Geasa

Sample geasa by classification are listed below. Each is described in terms of the consequences of breaking the oath. Feel free to add to it in any fashion you desire.

Minor Geasa

- Character suffers a -2 penalty to all Attack rolls for 24 hours each time the geis is broken.
- Character suffers a -2 penalty to all Damage rolls for 24 hours each time the geis is broken.
- Character suffers a -2 penalty to all Saving Throws for 24 hours each time the geis is broken.
- Character suffers a -4 penalty to a particular Skill check for 24 hours each time the geis is broken.
- Character suffers some minor physical defect every time he or she lies (skin turns red, hair falls out, voice squeaks, etc.).
- Character's weapon becomes difficult to hold. He or she must make a Reflex Save once per combat at DC 10 + the Level of the character who invoked the geis or drop the weapon.
- Character becomes more susceptible to harm. Any time he or she takes 10 or more points of damage, the character must make a Fortitude Save at DC 10 + the Level of the person who invoked the geis or suffer an additional 1d6 points of damage.
- Character loses his or her courage. At the beginning of every fight, he or she must make a Will Save at DC 10 + the Level of the character who invoked the geis or suffer from the effects of Fear.

Geasa. Those of 8th through 15th may bestow Moderate Geasa. Finally, a character who is 16th Level or higher, has the power to invoke Major Geasa.

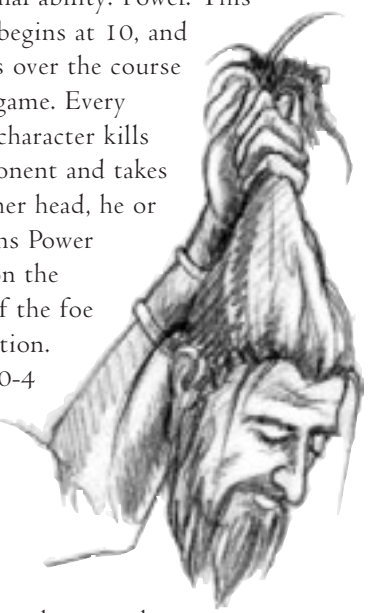
While it is not necessary, most Celts take the highest level geasa they can create. A person who imposes one on himself or herself wishes to demonstrate his or her honor by accepting the most dire consequences possible. To do less would be cowardly. Masters who impose them on their underlings may choose to set the level lower than they are capable. This is usually dependent upon the task inherent in the oath.

Severed Heads

Taking an opponent's head in victory is very important to the Celts. It symbolizes the capture of his or her power. Some of this power is transferred to the warrior who took the head.

Taking an Opponent's Power

All characters in CELTIC AGE have an additional ability: Power. This ability begins at 10, and changes over the course of the game. Every time a character kills an opponent and takes his or her head, he or she gains Power based on the Level of the foe in question. Table 10-4 designates how much Power is gained.



Note that the opponent does not have to be beheaded in combat. The head can be removed *post mortem,* but it only benefits the person who killed the target. No one else can gain this power, and the killer cannot get it without severing the head. However, only a coward would gang up on an opponent unless it is a large monster. Otherwise, individual combat is the way to honor. Dishonorable combat nets no Power gain for the victor. Further, a character can only gain

Power from his or her own species. Thus, Power cannot be earned by killing monsters.

Using Power

Power is spent on a variety of game effects that essentially make the character more formidable, at least temporarily. The character pays the cost in Power for the temporary benefit. Unless otherwise stated, all benefits last for one round. Spending Power to gain a benefit is a Free Action. Table 10-5 lists the cost for each benefit.

Some of the chart entries require further explanation:

Cast an Additional Spell: This ability can be used at any time. The user increases the number of spells he or she can cast at the given level by one for that day. This use of Power is good for the entire day, not just the usual single round. It expires at the end of the day, but the character may spend Power on this ability in the morning, and then wait to use the extra spell until later.

Acquire Additional Understanding: Celtic Druids and Wild Women cast their spells by powering them with their Understanding. Power can be converted into greater Understanding on a temporary basis. For every three points of Power the character spends, he or she can buy one additional point of Understanding. This Understanding is gone at the end of the day (when the character's Understanding pool resets) so it must be used the same day it is purchased.

Re-Roll One Die Roll: By spending Power, the character may choose to re-roll any unfavorable roll. The new result must be kept regardless of the outcome (though the character could choose to spend more Power to re-roll again). A character can only re-roll his or her own die rolls. This ability does not affect another character.

+3 Initiative Bonus: This bonus lasts for the duration of the battle. Once the fight is over it expires. It is also lost if the character chooses to spend a Full Action to re-roll his or her Initiative.

+10 Hit Points: These Hit Points last for 10 rounds, and then they vanish. They are treated as temporary Hit Points that are "lost first." The character adds 10 Hit Points to his or her total when this benefit is chosen. At the end of 10 rounds, he or she subtracts 10 from his or her

Table 10-3: Geasa (cont.)

Moderate Geasa

- Character suffers 2 points of Permanent Ability Damage to one Ability.
- Character loses one level. If the character is multi-classed, he or she loses a level from the highest Class.
- Character suffers 20 points of damage each time the geis is broken.
- Character is struck blind, deaf, or mute.
- Character becomes impotent or infertile.
- Character forgets his or her identity.

Major Geasa

- Character must make a Fortitude Save at DC 10 + the Level of the character that invoked the geis or die instantly. If the Saving Throw is made, the character takes 50 points of damage.
- One of the character's arms withers and falls off. Reduce Dexterity score by 2 and character can no longer fight with a sword or a thrusting spear.
- One of the character's legs withers and falls off. Reduce Dexterity score by 2 and cut Speed in half.
- Character is transformed into a monster.
- Character is attacked by a monster or other supernatural power, which haunts him or her for the rest of his or her life. The attack doesn't come every day, but it comes often enough, that defending against it consumes a good portion of the character's time.
- Character loses all Class Levels and must start over again at 1st Level.

Table 10-4: Power Gained by Beheading Opponents

Whenever a character cuts the head off of his or her foe, consult the chart below to determine how much Power is added to the character's total.

Opponent's Level	Power
1-4	1
5-8	2
9-12	4
13-16	8
17-20	16
21+	25

total if they have not already been lost in battle.

Temporary Feat with Prerequisites: The character may use a Feat that he or she does not have for one round as though the character did have the Feat. He or she must meet all the prerequisites, if any, for the Feat in question. For example, if the character wanted to temporarily gain the benefits of the Cleave Feat, he or she would have to already have the Power Attack Feat and a Strength of 13+.

Temporary Feat without Prerequisites: The character may use a Feat that he or she does not have for one round as though the character did have the Feat, even if he or she cannot meet the prerequisites. Thus, a character can gain access to the Cleave Feat even if he or she did not have the Power Attack Feat or a Strength of 13+. A character cannot access Special Feats with this ability.

A character can choose to spend Power at any time as a Free Action. This includes after the dice have been rolled. Thus, if a character rolls and misses his or her opponent, he or she can choose to spend Power to re-roll or to buy enough +1 Attack Bonuses so that the roll succeeds. The only limit to the expenditure of Power is how much the character has.

Heads as Totems

The Celts also make use of heads as totems. A head is capable of warding off evil and bestowing prestige upon its owner. A person gains protection from the head of the most powerful enemy he or she has slain. This defense is afforded in the form of bonuses to AC against attacks from Evil creatures and other special effects. Table 10-6 gives the specific bonuses.

A head's effective range is a circle with a 10-foot radius. Anyone within the circle gains the benefit of its protection. However, a head is not something that can practically be brought into

Table 10-5: Power Cost for Benefits

Benefit	Power
+1 Attack Bonus	2
+1 to AC	2
+1 Damage Bonus	1
+1 to Saving Throw	5
Cast an Additional First Level Spell	3
Cast an Additional Second Level Spell	6
Cast an Additional Third Level Spell	10
Cast an Additional Fourth Level Spell	15
Cast an Additional Fifth Level Spell	20
Acquire Additional Understanding	3
Re-roll One Die Roll	1
+3 Initiative Bonus	2
+10 Hit Point Bonus	5
Temporary Feat with Prerequisites	5
Temporary Feat without Prerequisites	10

Table 10-6: Bonuses against Evil Creatures

Determine the level of the creature to which the head originally belonged, then consult the table below for specific benefits. All of the entries in the Additional Benefits column are cumulative.

Level	AC Bonus	Additional Benefits
1-4	+1	None
5-8	+1	Evil creatures of 1-3 Hit Dice cannot enter the area of effect.
9-12	+2	Turn Undead as if a 3rd Level Cleric*
13-16	+2	Evil creatures of 4-6 Hit Dice cannot enter the area of effect.
17-20	+3	Turn Undead as if a 5th Level Cleric*
21+	+3	Evil Creatures of 7-9 Hit Dice cannot enter the area of effect.

*-The head must be presented as a Holy Symbol or focus for this ability.

battle. It's too big and gets in the way of a good fight. Moreover, it might be lost or damaged. They are typically kept as trophies and symbols of a warrior's might, not as practical devices to enhance one's ability in battle. A warrior might bring his or her most prestigious head to a battle, but it is displayed as a banner, not used in the fight.

The practical application of a head's anti-evil properties is in defense of the home. They are stored there so that no harm can come to the homestead and so that the residents will have extra protection should some evil attempt to attack it. Here too, a warrior's accomplishments can enhance his or her abilities. The highest level head sets the base bonus for protection from evil as per Table 10-6. However, for every three additional heads the Celt owns, an additional +1 AC Bonus is conferred against Evil creatures.

While some Celts do make carvings of heads as substitutes for the real thing, they are not quite as efficacious. A carved head is always treated as a 1st through 4th Level head. Likewise, a head that is purchased from another is not as potent as one the owner severed himself or herself. All purchased heads are treated as one class lower than their actual classification on Table 10-6 for purposes of benefits.

A severed head is also helpful in social settings. At banquets, warriors will bring their most prestigious head and sit it on the table in front of them. This is a measure of their prowess, and it adds to their presence at such gatherings. A Celt gains a bonus to his or her Charisma Modifier based on the prestige of the head brought to the feast. Table 10-7 outlines the exact bonus.

Table 10-7: Charisma Bonus Modifiers from Heads

Determine the level of the person to which the head originally belonged and then consult the chart below to determine the Charisma Bonus.

Level	Charisma Bonus
1-4	+1
5-8	+2
9-12	+3
13-16	+4
17-20	+5
21+	+6

11
Celts and Animals

While Celtic culture is highly attuned to nature, these are no tree-hugging lotus-eaters. If the gods had not wanted humans to eat animals, they would not have made the latter out of meat. However, some animals are sacred to the gods and must be protected. Others have earned their own share of nobility and should be respected for it.

Some animals have magical properties, and many Celts believe that fairy animals exist. Fairy animals are no less dangerous than the fairies themselves, though some of them help people instead as with the famous Dun Cow of Kirkham. White animals are sacred to the gods and may not be hunted. To be favored by a wild, white animal is a powerful sign indeed.

Celts place animals at the center of their universe. Though much of the Celtic world is becoming civilized, driven by agriculture and life in new city-like oppida, Celts still see themselves as forest dwellers. The forest is never far from the Celtic heart, even if they've chopped down all the trees to plant grain. Celts revere hunting, and their children are told all manner of tales about talking beasts – magic lives in animals.

The Wild Hunt

An ancient legend, for generations Celtic hunters have spoken of and feared this spectre. Those who hunt at night sometimes come across it in the wild: a pack of dogs following some scent accompanied by a great hunter. Just who the hunter is varies from place to place. Those who've seen it always name some great hero revered by their clan or tribe, or sometimes by them personally.

The Wild Hunt sometimes appears like any other group of dogs and men, and hunters have claimed to have spoken to the spectral hunter who later vanished. Others report them floating off the ground, sometimes high in the air and to have been white in color.

No one wants to see the Wild Hunt. Those who gaze upon it will die soon afterwards. Whether it presages a death that the gods had already determined, or whether looking at the Wild Hunt is the cause of death, no one can tell for certain. What almost all Celts agree upon is that they have no desire to see the Wild Hunt pass by.

Domestic Animals

No Celtic village or homestead is complete without a gaggle of assorted farm animals. Celts take better care of their animals than of themselves, at least when it comes to providing them shelter. Barns are often better-made than farmhouses, and Celts build strong fences and pens to restrain their animals.

Bees

Celts claim that bees have special knowledge of magic, which they pass on through their honey. This knowledge can be clarified if the honey is fermented and filtered to make mead, the intoxicating drink of the gods.

Just how deeply the Celts believe this is debatable – a holy excuse to get drunk and to

Bee

Size: Fine Animal

Hit Dice: 1 Hit Point or 12d8 (30 Hit Points [Swarm])

Initiative: +0

Speed: 5 feet, 40 feet Flying (Good)

AC: 14 (+4 Size)

Attacks: See below

Face/Reach: 1/2 foot by 1/2 foot / 1/2 foot

Special Attacks: Swarm

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fort +0/+4 (Swarm), Ref +2/+8 (Swarm), Will -3/+1 (Swarm)

Abilities: Str 4, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 5, Cha 10

Skills: Intuit Direction +2

Feats: None.

Climate/Terrain: Any Temperate

Organization: Solitary or Swarm

Challenge Rating: None or 2 (Swarm)

Treasure: Honey

Alignment: Always Neutral

Advancement: —

Swarm (Ex): A single bee is no trouble for an adventurer. Even if it stings, the damage is minimal, and the bee dies. An entire swarm of bees is another matter entirely. Bees swarm when they are angry (usually because their hive has been threatened) or because they have lost their queen. Either way, being in their way at such a time is ill-advised.

A bee swarm covers an area five feet in diameter. Anyone caught within it takes 2 points of damage per round from the frenzied stinging of the bees. Moreover, the bees will pursue anyone within range, especially if the individual in question attacked the hive. Characters stung in a swarm must make a Fortitude Save at DC 10 against the venom in the bees' stingers. While ordinarily one sting is not enough to harm a human, multiple ones can be lethal. Those who fail suffer 1d3 points of Constitution Damage.

It is virtually impossible to run away from a swarm of enraged bees. The cloud of angry insects will stay with the poor character, stinging him or her repeatedly. Submersion in water will get the character away as will getting into a shelter that can shut the insects out. However, a small portion of them may get inside with the character and will still have to be killed. Smoke will discourage bees from coming closer and fire will kill them, but both methods require large quantities. A single torch is not enough to give a bee swarm pause. They simply fly around it. A Fireball spell will cause damage. Similarly a torch does not discourage them, but a thick campfire might. Normal weapons have absolutely no effect.

Every round that it attacks, the swarm takes 1 point of damage regardless of whether it was damaged by the character or not. Bees die when they sting, so, by attacking, they thin themselves out. A swarm reduced to half its initial Hit Points breaks up.

reserve mead for the upper classes seems to be the root of this tale. No one actually worships bees, in any event. But they do try to build apiaries and attract bees into them. Having bees around seems to improve crop yields as well.

Celts work hard to gather honey, obsessively seeking wild honey in the forests. It is their only sweetener, and, of course, it provides mead. Destroying a bee colony is considered a crime since such an act lessens the supply of mead. Celts will also cover themselves in mud and try to move wild hives into the wooden boxes they build on their farms.

Cats

Celts do not, as a rule, like cats. There are some who keep these creatures, but cat owners are usually considered eccentric and often shunned by society. In Ireland, the Fianna are said to often fight against the Cat-Heads. These are evil men with heads of cats, who live on an island somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean and land on the shores of Ireland to pillage and plunder. They are assisted in this ravaging by both house cats and wild cats. The Fianna despise cats as a result. In Northern Britain, many Celts believe that cats – as the familiars of witches and other evil magic-users – can be forced to tell the future. Celtic tales are filled with the murder of cats, often in cruel and painful fashion.

Cat

Size: Tiny Animal
Hit Dice: 1/2d8 (2 Hit Points)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 30 feet
AC: 14 (+2 Size, +2 Dex)
Attacks: 2 Claws +4 melee (1d2-4), Bite -1 melee (1d3-4)
Face/Reach: 2 1/2 feet by 2 1/2 feet / 0 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1
Abilities: Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7
Skills: Balance +10, Climb +5, Hide +17*, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Spot +4
Feats: Weapon Finesse (Claw, Bite)
Climate/Terrain: Any Land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1/4
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Usually Neutral
Advancement: —

***Skills:** Cats receive +4 Racial Bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks. In tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the bonus rises to +8 for Hide checks. They receive a +8 Racial Bonus to Balance checks. A cat uses its Dexterity Modifier for Climb checks.

Cattle

Size: Medium Animal
Hit Dice: 4d8+12 (30 Hit Points)
Initiative: -1 (Dex)
Speed: 20 feet
AC: 9 (-1 Dex)
Attacks: Slam (females) +5 melee (1d3+2), or Gore (males) +5 melee (1d6+2)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +0, Will -2
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 1, Wis 6, Cha 4
Skills: None
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Temperate
Organization: Herd (10-100)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: Cattle are treasure.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: —

Cattle

Celts are obsessed with cattle. They like to eat their flesh, and they adore milk and other dairy products. Most of all, cattle are a status symbol. A chieftain is judged by the size of his herd. Stealing cattle is a common Celtic occupation, and so the herds must also be carefully guarded.

The animals themselves are significantly smaller than those of the 21st Century. A domestic cow, later known as the Celtic Ox *(Bos taurus longifrons),* stands about three or four feet high and weighs about 800 pounds. They come in many colors, chiefly reds and browns dappled with white, and have short horns. In addition to providing milk and meat, they can also be used to pull wagons.

Like most people of this period, Celts feed their cattle grass. The result is a flavorful but tough and stringy beef. This is why steaks are not highly prized; beef is usually stewed or boiled to make it at least somewhat chewable. In this age before refrigeration, aging beef to tenderize it is not really an option. Spices will someday help in this regard, but these products are not available in the Celtic world (and will not be for some centuries; trade between Rome and India still lies about two centuries in the future). Since many people lose their teeth before they are thirty, they are not eager to damage their irreplaceable molars and bicuspids trying to gnaw through the leathery flesh of a cow. Beef is often stewed or boiled for hours to soften it.

Celtic cattle are primarily dairy animals. They must be milked regularly, a chore for slaves and peasants. The cows of this time do not give as much milk as latter-day animals bred for the purpose, and often go dry. While this is a natural process, most Celts believe it to be the result of a magical attack and seek out the miscreant who put a spell on the cow.

Cattle are more susceptible to diseases than most of the other domestic beasts of the Celts. Their symbolic value makes a cattle owner much more reluctant to destroy a sick cow than a pig or sheep, and they tend to keep them in their herds until it is too late and the other animals have come down with illness. There are many magical remedies for this; Beltaine fires, for example, are very important for warding off sickness among cattle. Iron can also help: if one beats an afflicted cow with iron chains, the animal will not feel any pain but it will be transferred to the witch who put a spell on it.

Horn sickness (what later peoples will call distemper) can be cured by placing a chain over a cow's back while milking her. One can also try

making the animal breathe the smoke from an old burning shoe, or drilling a hole in one of the horns and pouring in pine sap.

Though cattle have been domesticated for many centuries, they still contain many of their wild genes and inherent behaviors. These are not the placid cud-chewers of two thousand years later. They must be constantly watched, lest they escape. They will trample a sleeping cowherd with great glee. And a bull can be highly dangerous.

Chickens

Celts keep chickens around for the obvious reasons: eggs and meat. And chickens, like pigs, will eat most anything including their own excrement. They also have many magical properties, usually by providing early warning of the presence of magic, and so they are important to have about. Vates also study them to divine the future.

A chicken's egg with no yolk, or no content at all, shows that the household is under magical attack. This can be warded off by taking the flock's most sexually active rooster and burying him alive nearby. It is bad luck to bring an egg into a house after dark, and the Veneti believe it unlucky to speak of eggs aboard a ship.

Chicken

Size: Small Animal
Hit Dice: 1/2d8 (2 Hit Points)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 20 feet
AC: 11 (+1 Size)
Attacks: Peck -4 melee (1d2-4)
Face/Reach: 2 1/2 feet by 2 1/2 feet / 0 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Detect Magic
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -4
Abilities: Str 3, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 3, Cha 5
Skills: None
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any temperate
Organization: Solitary or Flock (3-24)
Challenge Rating: 1/4
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: —

Detect Magic (Su): Chickens detect magic at will. This ability works exactly like the spell of the same name, except that it is always functioning. Of course, the chicken must be studied by those in the know to learn if it has detected magic since the it has no means of expressing itself to human beings.

Dogs

Without question, Celts are dog people. Many Celtic gods appear in the form of dogs, especially gods of the hunt. Celts love their dogs, allow them to sleep with them in their homes, and grow up surrounded by canines. Dogs hunt with warriors and even sometimes accompany them into battle. Celtic war-dogs are less common than heroic tales might indicate: the Celts appreciate a good dog, and like to tell of his or her heroism. And of course they give them names. While there is no widespread *geis* against killing dogs, as exists for some animals, the dog's owner may be offended enough to spark a blood feud and most Celts consider this ample grounds for which to seek vengeance. Most Celts have such love for dogs that no extra incentive like a *geis* is necessary to protect them.

The Celts, like all peoples of this time, breed mutts. They prefer big, hairy dogs. In one of the few gestures of equality allowed to the commoner, peasants (but not, of course, slaves) are allowed to have a dog. Even the Celtic nobility can't bring itself to deprive peasants of such companionship. Every Celtic village, oppidum, or hill-fort is alive with dozens of snarling, yapping, licking dogs.

Some Celtic legends speak of a time, long ago, when Ireland was ruled by the friendly and benevolent people known as the Dog-Heads. For generations the Dog-Heads repelled the violent attacks of their sworn enemies, the evil Cat-Heads. Eventually, the Dog-Heads left Ireland for the Western Isles. No one has seen a Dog-Head for generations, and even the Celts admit this may simply be a tale meant to illustrate the goodness of dog.

Dog

Size: Small Animal
Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 Hit Points)
Initiative: +3 (Dex)
Speed: 40 feet
AC: 15 (+1 Size, +3 Dex, +1 Natural)
Attacks: Bite +2 melee (1d4+1)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Scent
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11
Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +5, Wilderness Lore +1*
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Land
Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Pack (3-8)
Challenge Rating: 1/3
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually Neutral
Advancement:—
***Skills:** Dogs receive a +8 Racial Bonus to Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent.

Goose

Size: Small Animal
Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (3 Hit Points)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 20 feet, 50 feet Flying (Poor)
AC: 13 (+1 Size, +2 Natural)
Attacks: Peck +2 melee (1d4+3)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills: Intimidate +2*, Intuit Direction +4, Listen +2, Swim +2, Wilderness Lore +2
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Temperate
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1/3
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: —
***Skills:** A goose on the field of battle with naked men running around, gets a +4 Circumstance Bonus to its Intimidate checks.

Geese

According to Celtic legend, the universe began as the mythical Sun-Egg. This cosmic egg (a feature common to other early peoples and 21st Century "Big Bang" cosmology) was laid by a goose. Most Celtic tribes therefore hold the goose to be sacred since it predates the existence of all else, and eating goose-flesh is a terrible crime. All people are under a *geis* to never kill a goose, even if the bird attacks them. The miscreant will surely die a horrible death.

Flocks of geese are often found in Celtic settlements, where they warn against danger and attack interlopers. Geese are not very smart, but they are fierce and bad-tempered. Their loud honking and hostile nature makes them very effective guardians. Not only do they watch for human enemies, they drive away hedgehogs, which Celts believe are insidious little thieves who sneak into cattle pens and drain cows' udders dry.

Most Celtic war gods are accompanied by war geese, which fly into battle alongside them and smite their enemies with deadly pecks. Some Celtic warriors have tried to take geese into battle with them, but it is very difficult to train a goose to tell friend from foe and they are not nearly as effective as a war dog. The experiments continue, however, as a goose can easily unman a naked Celtic warrior and this makes them the ultimate battlefield terror weapon. Trained geese are not unknown in the Celtic world, but they are highly unusual.

Oddly, while geese have a strong dislike for humans – they are not even particularly fond of their masters – they do like other animals and often form bonds with them. Geese will attach themselves to dogs, horses, or cows and follow them about for fellowship. But they will not return affection to humans.

Horse

Size: Large Animal
Hit Dice: 3d8+9 (22 Hit Points)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 60 feet
AC: 14 (-1 Size, +2 Dex, +4 Natural)
Attacks: 2 Hooves +4 melee (1d4+3), Bite -1 melee (1d3+1)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Scent
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 8
Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Usually Neutral Good
Advancement: —

Horses

The steed that my true love rides on
Is lighter than the wind;
With silver he is shod before,
With burning gold behind.

—Ballad of Tam Lin

Celts revere the horse, and there is a widespread *geis* against eating horsemeat. One should not feed horseflesh to dogs, either. Many tales of great heroes include magical horses, horses able to fly or perform other great deeds.

Horses have intelligence far beyond that of other animals, according to Celts, along with unique personalities. As such, they can become ghosts if killed violently and will haunt those who did them wrong. Beheading a horse is an especially foul offense, and the ghost of the headless horse will appear to the offender. So while it is honorable and in fact required of a warrior to behead a fallen human foe, the same warrior must not harm said foe's horse. Inevitably, some become so enraged by bloodlust that they do so anyway.

Celtic nobles passionately engage in horse-breeding, and Celts value horses for both speed and beauty. Central Gaul is known for its fine horses, but most tribes engage in at least some stud farming. Celts are also outstanding trainers of horses, and can teach mounts many skills. Celtic breeding has produced some fairly large horses by the standards of the day, though not as big as those that will become common in two thousand years.

Despite their skills with horses, Celts are not obsessed with them the way they are with cattle. Horse rustling is seen as dishonorable: because the horse has a spirit more noble than that of any other animal, to steal it from its master is the same as enslaving a person of noble blood. Celts do not go on horse raids, and, though they will take the horse of a slain enemy, they do not normally steal them as they do cattle. A Celtic cavalryman gives his horse a name and will ride no other as long as his own horse is healthy. In tribes that ride to battle, a young warrior is given his or her horse with the same solemnity that surrounds taking arms for the first time.

Celts do not extend the same courtesy to the Romans. They easily overcome their inhibitions by telling themselves that Roman-owned horses deserve more appreciative owners. Celts will steal Roman horses and call it a favor to the animal.

Warriors prefer to ride stallions, not only for their martial spirit but also because they are considered more loyal. If the rider encounters fairies, a stallion will fight them to protect his rider but a mare might go over to them. There are many kinds of magical healing methods to help horses, usually involving placing a knotted string around the afflicted body part and calling on the goddess Epona to aid the animal.

The spur is a Celtic invention. They are made of bronze or iron, with small spikes on them. Many other items of Celtic tack will be used for centuries to come. The saddle is an ancient device; Celts probably learned of it from the Scythians long ago. But Celts developed the snaffle bit, a much more humane device than the Roman bit, which yanks the horse's head severely. The Celtic snaffle bit does not extend under the horse's jaw, and is much less painful. Harnesses for horses, to hold the saddle in place, are also a Celtic innovation. Celtic saddles usually have small decorative straps dangling from them. Celts do not armor their horses and, like all other peoples of this time, lack knowledge of the stirrup.

A wild horse is considered possessed of an evil spirit, however. Wild horses will attempt to harm people, as evidenced by creatures like the Eaèh Uisge or the Kelpie. Placing iron shoes on them helps break this spirit, and thus Celts shoe their horses with iron, which is fairly unusual in this time. The horseshoe is held to have many magical powers: a horseshoe nailed above a doorway (pointing up, so the luck doesn't run out) gives good luck to those within. One nailed on the doorstep of a barn, in the position of a horse leaving the barn, gives good luck to the horses who live there.

Romans use the caltrop, a four-pronged iron device that when thrown on the ground lands with one spike sticking upwards. If jammed into the soft inner hoof of a horse, it will cause enormous pain and the animal usually has to be destroyed. This enrages Celts, who consider it a violation of the *geis* against harming horses. They do not use caltrops, and will kill Romans they find in possession of them.

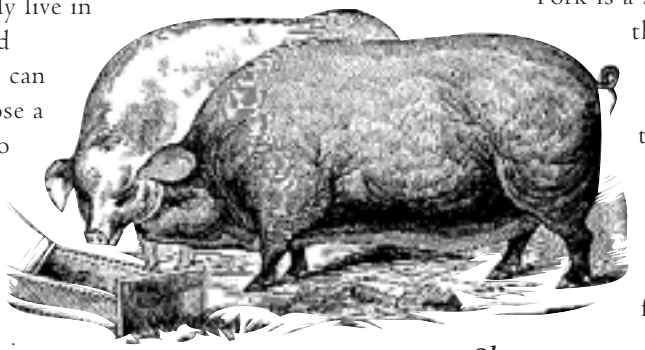
Pigs

Celts love pork. While the beef of this period is tough and really not an inviting dish, pigs yield much better flesh. These are not the same lazy swine they will be in two thousand years. Some Celts keep them in sties because pigs love water. If a pig sees a watering hole, it can't help but dive in and wallow. This destroys it as a source

Pig

Size: Medium Animal
Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 Hit Points)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 40 feet
AC: 16 (+6 Natural)
Attacks: Gore +4 melee (1d8+3)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Scent
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4
Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Land
Organization: Solitary or Herd (5-20)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 3-5 HD (Medium)

of fresh water for any nearby human settlement. For this reason, desert peoples declare the pig hateful unto their gods and will not keep them.



Celts usually live in well-watered regions and can afford to lose a few spots to pigs. A pig in a sty is fed slops, just like they will be in the future: rotting vegetables, meat scraps, all manner of kitchen garbage. Pigs will eat almost anything, including careless drunken humans who fall into their dens. They will also gnaw the hand off a slow-witted swineherd. Cruel chieftains will have prisoners executed by binding them and tossing them in with the pigs, who will proceed to feast on this bounty starting with the softest, choicest parts. Celts claim that Germans feed the dead to the pigs, but no Celt will admit to the practice. Some Celts prefer to let their pigs run loose and feed on the ample piles of acorns found in the forests. This means less work in caring for the animals, but much more when it's time to catch and slaughter them.

Any Celtic village or homestead of means will have pigs. It is the mark of distinction to feed a guest pork; much less so to provide beef.

Pork is a status food, a view shared by the Romans (one of the few cultural issues on which these peoples agree). The source of the meat has little meaning; while a hunter gets the expected satisfaction of eating his own kill, Celts are just as eager for farm-raised pork as for the wild variety.

Sheep

Sheep are raised for their meat and their wool. There are no special *geasa* regarding sheep – the Celts need some animal they can eat without retribution. Flocks of sheep are more common in the developed areas like central Gaul or Noricum, where a wool trade functions. Colder weather makes for better wool, and so Romans are glad to obtain Celtic woolen goods.

Lamb is a prized dish reserved for the warrior class. Older sheep are only eaten toward the end of their useful lives as wool producers. Celts only slaughter lambs on special occasions; the animals are considered more valuable for their coats. As an added bonus, tea made of dried sheep's dung is thought to cure many diseases.

Sheep

Size: Small Animal
Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 Hit Points)
Initiative: 1 (Dex)
Speed: 20 feet
AC: 9 (-1 Dex)
Attacks: Slam +0 melee (1d2)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +3, Ref -1, Will -2
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 6, Cha 4
Skills: None
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Land
Organization: Herd (10-100)
Challenge Rating: 1/3
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: —

Aurochs

Size: Large Animal
Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (50 Hit Points)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 30 feet
AC: 16 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +6 Natural)
Attacks: Gore +10 melee (1d8+5), 2 Hooves +5 (1d4+2)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +4
Abilities: Str 20, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 11
Skills: Listen +7, Spot +8
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Temperate
Organization: Solitary or Herd (3-7)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 9-12 HD (Large)

Wild Animals

Celts like to hunt, and it is an important social occasion. Like other Celtic social occasions, it is marked with heavy drinking, so the animals do stand a fair chance against a Celtic hunter. Only warriors may tackle the large game animals; even children are allowed to go after small game like birds or squirrels. Celts normally hunt with spears, though some will fight bears with a sword.

Aurochs

A long-horned cousin of the Celtic Ox, the aurochs *(Bos taurus primigenius),* runs wild in the European forests. The aurochs is much larger than the domestic ox, standing six feet tall and boasting more than twice the weight of its tame cousin. And, unlike its docile relations, the aurochs is both wily and mean. A single aurochs is more than a match for a pack of a half-dozen wolves, and hunters consider it the most dangerous game animal. Few of them fall prey to Celtic spears. The aurochs not only uses its horns, hooves, and bulk to defend itself, it will also attack humans or wolves it comes across and considers vulnerable.

The aurochs prefers woodlands, where it eats leaves and plants. They roam in small herds of a dominant male and several females, plus their young. The herd will adopt a circular "hedgehog" defense if threatened, placing the calves within a circular perimeter and fending off predators with their horns and hooves. They will rarely charge from this formation, so as not to leave a vulnerable opening leading to the young. As long as the calves are not threatened and the herd is not attacked by spears or arrows, a group of aurochs can be safely avoided if encountered in the wild.

Far more dangerous is the lone, young aurochs bull. Young males roam on their own for several years before they reach their full size and gain the experience to take a string of cows from another dominant male. With no young to protect, the lone bull is very aggressive and will in fact stalk human hunters if it spots them first. And with no females in its charge, the young bull is extremely bad-tempered and eager to work out its rage on others. They have no fear, but are very sneaky and can move with surprising stealth for their great bulk. Aurochs do not eat meat, but are well aware of what animals eat them and are smart enough to understand the advantages of striking first.

The aurochs cannot be domesticated (at least no sane Celt has ever tried). Capturing a live one is a nearly impossible task for starters. They remain in the wild, a lure for hunters eager to make a name for themselves and the bane of lone wolves and wanderers.

Bear

The bear is the symbol of the goddess, Berne, and also a moon emblem. Many Celts revere the bear for its ferocity and strength, but there is no *geis* against killing them. In much of the Celtic world, the bear and the boar are considered magically linked; in a forest where one finds a boar, it will be balanced by an equally fierce bear.

Bears found in Celtic Europe are not as large and fierce as those of other continents, but neither are they harmless. A full-grown bear can be much larger than a man, up to seven feet tall standing on its hind legs, and in some cases over 1,000 pounds. They do not normally seek fights with humans or other animals but become very angry if they are annoyed. They are one of the few animals that will kill for fun,

Bear

Size: Large Animal
Hit Dice: 7d8+35 (66 Hit Points)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 40 feet
AC: 15 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +5 Natural)
Attacks: 2 Claws +14 melee (1d8+), Bite +9 melee (2d8+)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Bear Hug, Improved Grab
Special Qualities: Scent
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities: Str 29, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8
Skills: Listen +7, Spot +9, Swim +14
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 8-12 HD (Large)

Bear Hug (Ex): A bear that gets a hold on creatures of Large or smaller size can attempt to squeeze the life out of it. The real danger from a bear hug is not from the crushing as is often thought but rather from suffocation. As the bear squeezes and air escapes the lungs, the chest cavity is collapsed further making it harder for the lungs to fill up with air.

A character in a bear hug can remain conscious for a number of rounds equal to twice his or her Constitution. However, the bear reduces this time by inflicting damage in the squeeze. Every round, the bear deals 1d4+2 points of damage that is applied against the character's remaining rounds of consciousness. When the character is out of time, he or she drops to 0 Hit Points. The following round, the victim goes to -1 Hit Points and is Dying. The round after that, he or she dies from suffocation.

The only way to escape from the bear once it locks in the hold is to break the hold itself (or get help from a comrade). The roll to escape suffers a -4 Circumstance Penalty, though, owing to the bear's size.

Improved Grab (Ex): A bear that hits with both of its Claw Attacks can make a Grapple check as a Free Action and without provoking an Attack of Opportunity. If it is successful, the bear has locked the target into a Bear Hug.

and their well-known fondness for honey often brings them into conflict with Celts.

If enraged, a bear will attack with its powerful claws and will also attempt to grab an opponent and crush it with the famous bear hug tactic. They have powerful front legs, and will also attack with closed fists to deliver stunning blows.

Celts hunt bears to prove their manliness, and they also enjoy eating roasted bear flesh. Bear-hunting is pretty easy compared to chasing a wild boar: find the bear and fight it. Celts believe that if they kill a wild boar, its mystical companion bear will come looking for the hunter and try to kill him or her.

Boar

Listen, little pig,
Oh happy little pig!
Do not go rooting
On top of the mountain,
But stay here,
Secluded in the wood,
Hidden from the dogs
Of Rhydderch the Faithful.

—Four Ancient Books of Wales

Pigs are smart animals, so much so that even the closely-bred varieties of the 21st Century will still show a spark of their original intelligence. Few animals can match a wild boar for intelligence and, if cornered, for utter fury.

Boars live in forested areas, preferring dense thickets and undergrowth. They are grayish-black, with short hair and very coarse bristles and have two large tusks growing from their lower jaw. A wild boar is leaner than a domestic hog, and much larger: a full-grown adult male stands 3 to 4 feet high and weighs 400 to 500 pounds. Like their domestic cousins, they like to wallow.

Also like the domestic pig, they will eat almost anything. They prefer to feed at night, using their tusks to dig up roots. They also eat insects and small animals. A boar does not hunt larger animals, but will kill and eat any creature it feels is a threat, and a wild boar has a paranoid streak that a modern-day garage publisher would envy.

When hunted, the boar will lay false trails, use creeks and streams to throw off dogs tracking it by scent, and make great use of cover. Boars often will double-back on their trail, hide in dense undergrowth, and burst forth to ambush hunters. They depend on the fury of their charge to bowl over their enemy, stabbing with their tusks and ripping with their powerful teeth. They instinctively know to go for the soft areas and, when attacking humans, prefer to rip out the hunter's guts.

Celts hunt boars with tracking dogs and boar spears. Dogs hate boars, who return the feeling with gusto. But a dog is no match for a wild boar; they can only hope to track the animal and delay it for the hunters to arrive. If left alone, a boar can easily dispatch an entire pack of a dozen hunting dogs. Dogs are faster than boars, however, and will not stick around long enough to be wiped out unless their humans are in danger.

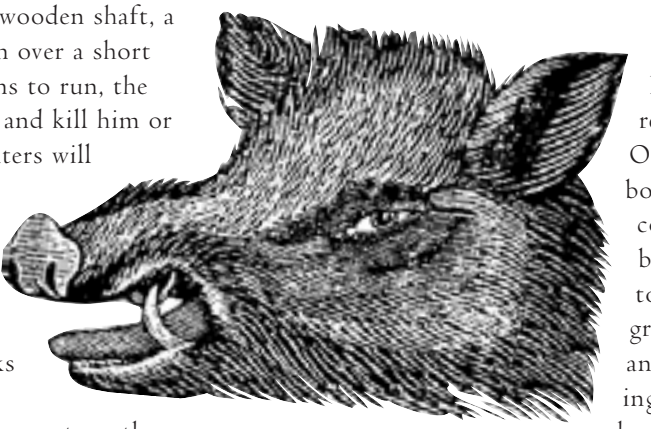
The boar spear is a long shaft of fire-hardened wood, with a heavy steel tip (iron in less sophisticated parts of the Celtic world) and cladding along the shaft for about two feet behind the head. At the end of the cladding, what marks this as a boar spear is the heavy cross-piece mounted at a right angle to the

Boar

Size: Medium Animal
Hit Dice: 3d8+9 (22 Hit Points)
Initiative: +0 (Dex)
Speed: 40 feet
AC: 16 (+6 Natural)
Attacks: Gore +4 melee (1d8+3)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Ferocity
Special Qualities: Scent
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 3, Wis 15, Cha 13
Skills: Listen +7, Spot +5
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Temperate
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 4-5 HD (Medium)
Ferocity (Ex): A board is so tenacious and mean-spirited that it will continue to attack with no penalties even when it is Disabled or Dying.

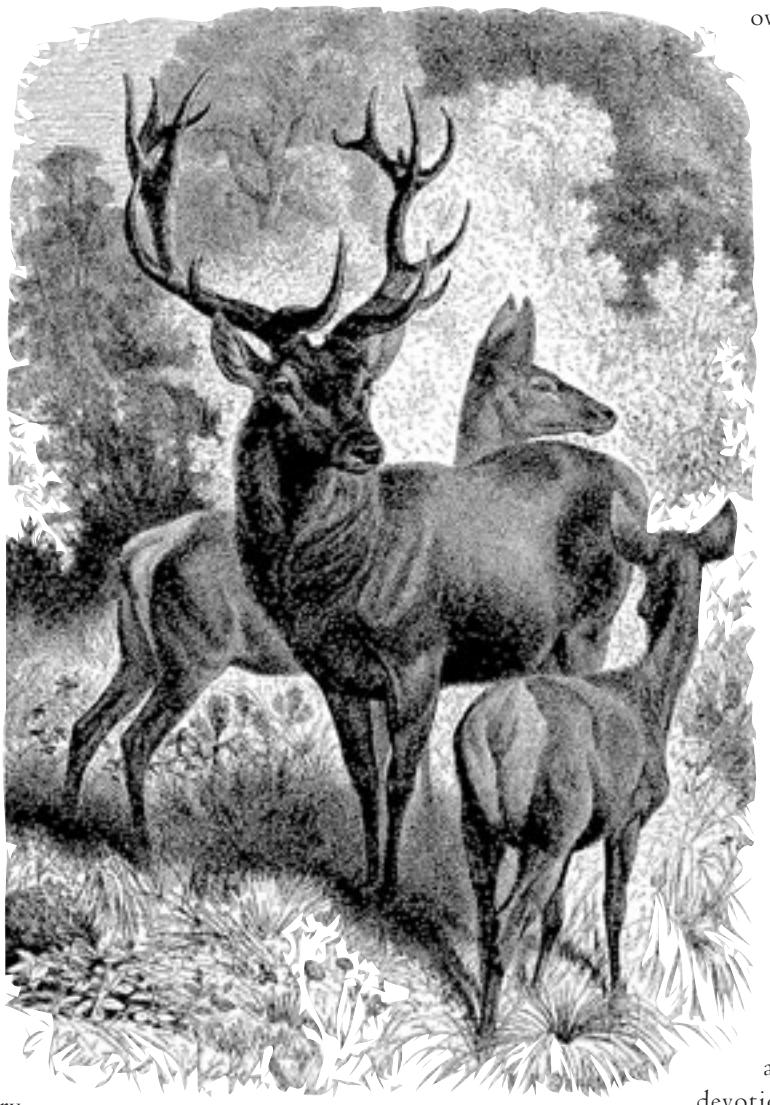
shaft. This is a vitally important piece of equipment. A boar is big and tough, and in battle with a human becomes utterly consumed by the desire to kill. If the hunter stabs the boar with a spear, the boar will "climb" the shaft, forcing it into its own body and through so that it can get to the hunter and disembowel the unfortunate with its tusks before dying itself. The cross-piece is designed to stop this action, though sometimes it snaps.

The hunter dares not let go of the spear: even impaled with a heavy wooden shaft, a boar is faster than a human over a short distance. If the hunter turns to run, the boar will overtake the fool and kill him or her on the spot. Some hunters will throw spears at the boar first to wound and weaken it, but this usually accomplishes little more than to enrage an animal that already walks around angry by its very nature. No human has the arm strength necessary to kill a boar with a thrown spear; to finish off the porker, the hunter is going to have to get up close and personal. The most effective method is to provoke an attack and hold the boar spear out to the rushing pig, letting the force of its charge impale it on the spear. This takes a steady hand and cold spirit to actually achieve.



Successfully slaying a wild boar is a major accomplishment; the hunt itself often takes on the air of a religious ritual. The hunter takes the head, though it is usually not kept around like the head of a human enemy. A famous boar might have his head kept for posterity, though, if the tale of the hunt is worth re-telling. Otherwise, the boar's head is cooked and brought forth to the diners to great acclamation and heavy drinking. The boar's head is a powerful symbol of fertility, strength, cunning, and courage, and so many warriors decorate their weapons and trumpets with its image.

Boars have a pretty good record against humans: the number of hunters killed by adult male boars probably exceeds that of boars killed by hunters. And in both mythical stories and the fiction of 2,000 years later, a common plot device is the use of a boar to murder a foe (by placing the victim in the boar's path or otherwise making him or her vulnerable to the beast). Boars are so fierce and so likely to kill rather than be killed, that there is little suspicion surrounding an untimely death at the tusks of an angry hog. Celts are greatly impressed by the intelligence of the wild boar, but this effect is probably exaggerated by the fact that, much like latter-day Americans, many Celts hunt while drunk.



Celts name boars (just as they seem to give names to everything else), and a boar that kills several hunters gains its own measure of fame. Hunters will travel far to try their spear against such an animal. Should they succeed, they are expected to entertain the people on whose lands the boar roams with a mighty feast.

Among the Belgae, the boar is sacred to the goddess Arduinna (whose sacred lands will one day be called the Ardennes). Placing an apple in its mouth while it is roasted, and when it is served, placates the goddess.

Deer

Celts have great respect for deer but hunt them anyway. Deer take souls to the Otherworld, and their antlers symbolize a powerful life force. To bring down a stag with a spear is a great accomplishment, and shows not only a hunter's prowess but also victory over magical forces since deer are thought to be the cattle of the fairy people.

Most potent of all is the White Stag, which may lead hunters deep into the forest to unveil magical wonders. The Roman rebel Quintus Sertorius gained a huge following among the Celtiberians in large part due to his pet white fawn; the animal's devotion to him showed how the gods favored his cause. Magic-users believe that deerskin parchment gives added power to written enchantments.

Celts hunt both stags and does year-round, but it is considered a bad thing to kill a fawn or the mother of a small fawn. One will surely suffer for such a cruel act.

Deer

Size: Large Animal
Hit Dice: 3d8+3 (16 Hit Points)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 60 feet
AC: 14 (-1 Size, +2 Dex, +3 Natural)
Attacks: Gore +4 melee (1d8+2), 2 Hooves -1 melee (1d4+1)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Scent
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Listen +7, Spot +5
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Temperate
Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Herd (3-10)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 4-5 HD (Large)

Frogs

The frog has many magical powers, especially in healing. A sore throat can be cured by capturing a live frog, wrapping it in flannel, and binding it against the victim's throat. This will remove the "frog in the throat." Toothache can also be cured if the sufferer captures a live frog, forces its mouth open, spits into the frog's mouth and asks the frog to take his or her pain. The frog must then be released.

Charms made of frog bones will help ward off evil, but only if the wearer did not kill the frog. The best way to obtain such bones is from a frog killed by ants, but the amulet is far less effective if the one who made it heard the frog's death scream. Celts believe that frogs utter a terrible scream when they expire, and so they do not like to kill them.

Celts living in crannogs are of course surrounded by frogs and use short spears to gig them. Frogs are considered fairly nasty food and are eaten mostly by peasants and slaves.

Salmon

> *Weak and small as I am,*
> *On the foaming beach of the ocean,*
> *In the day of trouble, I shall be*
> *Of more service to thee than 300 salmon.*
>
> **—The Consolation of Taliesin**

Fishing is not usually a noteworthy event; while commoners are not allowed to hunt noble game, they are not prevented from taking fish. But the salmon is a special fish, thought to embody ancient wisdom.

The salmon is a fairy creature, existing simultaneously in both the magical and physical realms. This is why its flesh is red, like a land animal. It also changes shape during its spawning season, proof of its magical abilities. And like other fish, the salmon has no sex organs – Celts claim that this means fish must be very cerebral, since they waste none of their time with thoughts of sexual desire. Eating fish is therefore good for the brain, and no fish is smarter than the salmon.

To catch and eat a salmon is a great feat. They are so single-minded in their determination to reach their spawning grounds, they ignore hooks. The swift-flowing streams they prefer make it difficult to net them. Instead, one who would catch a salmon must use either spear or bare hands.

Salmon were the first creatures to inhabit the earth, and thus have great wisdom. One may gain their wisdom by eating them, if the knowledge-seeker can catch the right fish. Not all salmon have this power, which they gain from eating hazel nuts. A very few salmon are even capable of speech, and of performing acts of magic. It is best not to anger these fish, though they will occasionally aid humans if persuaded that this is in the best interests of creation.

Fionn mac Cumhaill cooked the Salmon of Knowledge as a lad and burned his thumb while roasting the fish. He stuck the thumb in his mouth and gained knowledge. Ever after, he could gain insight by sucking his thumb. Fish of such power, capable of bestowing knowledge years later, are extremely rare.

Wolves

Celtic lore takes a very positive view of the wolf as a relative of the beloved dog. Wolves are considered dangerous since they will attack lone humans when food is scarce. Packs of them roam the deep forests of Celtic Europe. But

Frog

Size: Diminutive Animal
Hit Dice: 1/4 d8 (1 Hit Point)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 10 feet
AC: 13 (+3 Size)
Attacks: None
Face/Reach: 1 foot by 1 foot / 0 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Curative Powers, Proof against Evil
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -3
Abilities: Str 4, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 5, Cha 3
Skills: Jump +10
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Temperate, Marsh, and Forest
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1/4
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: —

Curative Powers (Su): Frogs can heal some ailments. Binding a live frog to the throat cures a sore throat. Spitting into the frog's mouth and asking it to take one's pain cures toothaches.

Proof against Evil (Su): A totem made from the bones of a dead frog (that the user did not kill) will provide Protection against Evil in a 5-foot radius.

Salmon

Size: Small Fey

Hit Dice: 2d6+2 (9 Hit Points)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 50 feet (swimming)

AC: 17 (+1 Size, +2 Dex, +4 Natural)

Attacks: None

Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Wisdom of the Universe

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 7, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 4

Skills: Knowledge (Nature) +10, Knowledge (Universe) +16, Swim +12

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative

Climate/Terrain: Freshwater

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Usually Neutral

Advancement: 3-6 HD (Small)

Wisdom of the Universe (Su): Salmon are wise in the ways of the universe and can sometimes transfer this knowledge if they are eaten. A character who eats a salmon makes a Will Save at DC 20. If it is successful, he or she can choose to benefit from one of the following effects:

- **Gain Knowledge of One Specific Thing:** The character knows a fact that he or she did not before, that was in question, or that answers a difficult question. The player chooses the fact, and the GM gives him or her the information.
- **Gain the Salmon's Knowledge (Nature) Skill Points:** The character gets a number of Skill Points in Knowledge Nature equal to the amount by which he or she exceeded the DC of the Save. The minimum number gained is 1, and the maximum is the Salmon's total Ranks in this Skill.
- **Gain the Salmon's Knowledge (Universe) Skill Points:** This ability works exactly the same as the one for Knowledge (Nature), except that it is the Salmon's Knowledge (Universe) skill that is affected.

Salmon are also intelligent and can be convinced to consult on a problem.

Celts do not normally hunt for wolves. They do so only when a pack has tasted human flesh. These must be exterminated before they develop a preference for it.

Celts have also picked up from their German neighbors the legend of the werewolf, a man who can change form into a wolf. These are not considered inherently evil or dangerous, and in Ireland some tribes proudly claim descent from werewolves. A werewolf does not bear hatred for people, though like normal wolves they will kill humans in hard times and are to be avoided.

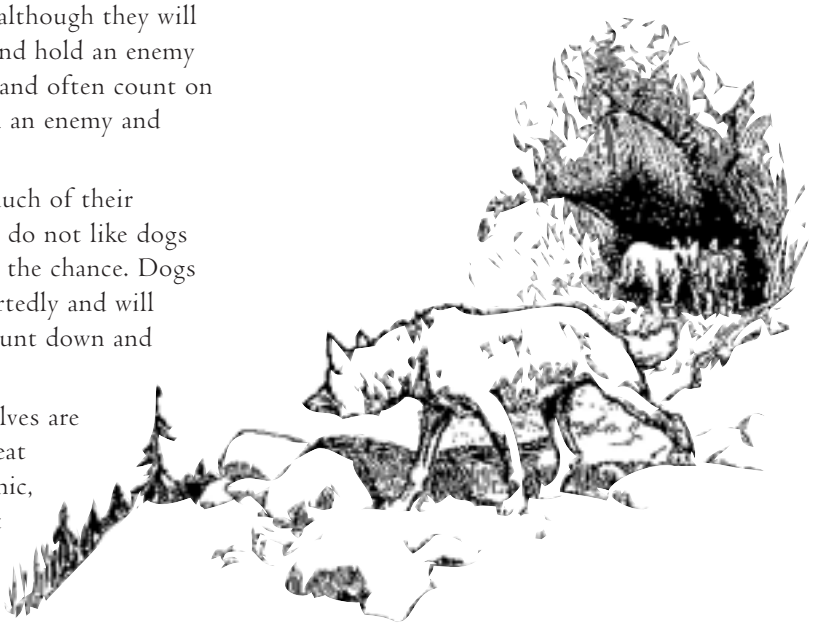
Wolves are highly intelligent, and roam in packs. Packs are usually made up of relatives: littermates for the most part, sometimes from one or more litters and more rarely including cousins (litters of littermates). A typical wolf can be white, gray, brown, or black, and weighs about 150 pounds for a full-grown male, about 100 for an adult female. They mate for life and will conduct their own blood feuds against those who kill their mates or pups. The

terrifying howl of the wolf is used to keep the pack together when its members are out of sight of one another.

Wolves have powerful jaws, which are their main weapon. While they have claws, like dogs they do not use them in combat, although they will try to grab with their paws and hold an enemy still to bite it. They are fast and often count on the first rush to knock down an enemy and stun it.

While Celts accord wolves much of their fondness for the dog, wolves do not like dogs and will kill them if they get the chance. Dogs return this hatred whole-heartedly and will encourage their humans to hunt down and exterminate wolf packs.

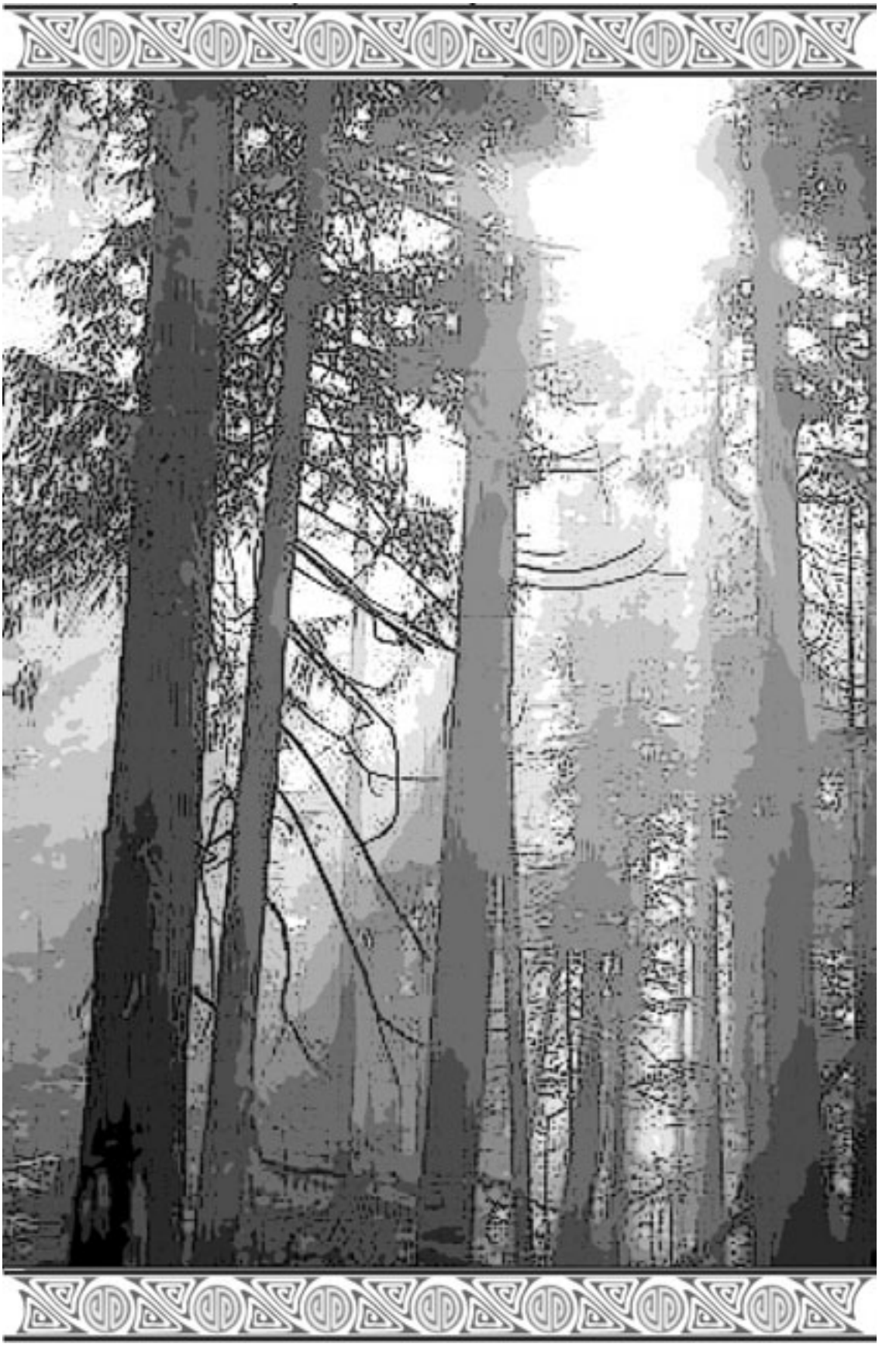
While they are predators, wolves are successful because they will eat almost anything vaguely organic, including carrion. They hunt small animals and prefer prey they can kill alone, but, when they are hungry, they will go after deer and other larger game as a pack. They avoid dangerous animals like humans, aurochs, and bears unless faced with starvation; given the choice, they'd rather attack the very young or very old and avoid risk.



Wolf

Size: Medium Animal
Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 Hit Points)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 50 feet
AC: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Natural)
Attacks: Bite +3 melee (1d6+1)
Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Trip
Special Qualities: Scent
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
Skills: Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Wilderness +1*
Feats: Weapon Finesse (Bite)
Climate/Terrain: Any Forest, Hills, Plains, and Mountains
Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Pack (7-16)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 3 HD (Medium), 4-5 HD (Large)

Trip (Ex): A wolf that hits with its Bite Attack may attempt to Trip its opponent as a Free Action without provoking an Attack of Opportunity. If the Trip attempt fails, the target may not try to Trip the wolf.



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Celtic Monsters

Celts don't always fight each other or the Romans. There is much glory to be found in defeating a dread beast and protecting one's tribe in so doing. As they do with just about everything else, Celts put names to especially feared monsters, and then make songs about their victories over these creatures. Celts hate monsters: very few of these creatures are seen as anything other than irredeemably foul beings which must be eliminated. By definition, monsters have no honor, and thus a Celtic warrior may use any means necessary to kill them. Behavior which would otherwise dishonor the warrior is acceptable; for example, there is no penalty for lying to a monster. Listed below is a collection of nasties that plague Celtic lands.

Amphipthere

This terrifying creature is a giant snake with horns on its head and wings on its back. It is native to the British Isles, but it has also been seen in Gaul, where it is known as a Guivre. It is an extremely aggressive and vicious predator. It especially hates human beings and attacks them on sight. The creature makes its home in the forest and occasionally in marshlands. Intruders are dealt with severely.

In combat, the Amphipthere strikes with its horns, goring its targets. It can also bite, which is its preferred tactic against wounded prey, making it easier to eat them. Its most fearsome attack, though, is its ability to constrict its prey by wrapping the target up in its coils and squeezing the life out of it.

These creatures are so terrifying that, during the Middle Ages, some warlords would feature them

Other Monsters

The following monsters from the standard game are either Celtic in origin, or they were at least partially inspired by Celtic legends. They are therefore appropriate for use in this setting:

Annis
Athach
Barghest
Basilisk
Behir
Cockatrice
Ettin
Hill Giant
Ogre
Sprite
Werewolf*
Wight
Wyvern
Yeth Hound

*-This legend actually has its roots in Ancient Greece and Rome, where it was known as *versipellis* or "turnskin." However, the belief spread throughout Europe and would have been known by the Celts. In fact, the modern name for this creature comes from Old English with the word, *"wer,"* meaning "man" added to "wolf."

Amphipthere

Size: Large Beast

Hit Dice: 6d10+12 (45 Hit Points)

Initiative: +3 (Dex)

Speed: 20 feet, Climb 20 feet, Fly 20 feet (Poor)

AC: 19 (-1 Size, +3 Dex, +7 Natural)

Attacks: Bite +8 melee (1d8+5) or Gore +8 melee (1d8+5)

Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet (Coiled) / 10 feet

Special Attacks: Constriction

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +3

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +8, Move Silently +10, Swim +8

Feats: None

Climate/Terrain: Temperate, Warm, and Tropical Forest or Swamp

Organization: Solitary or Pair

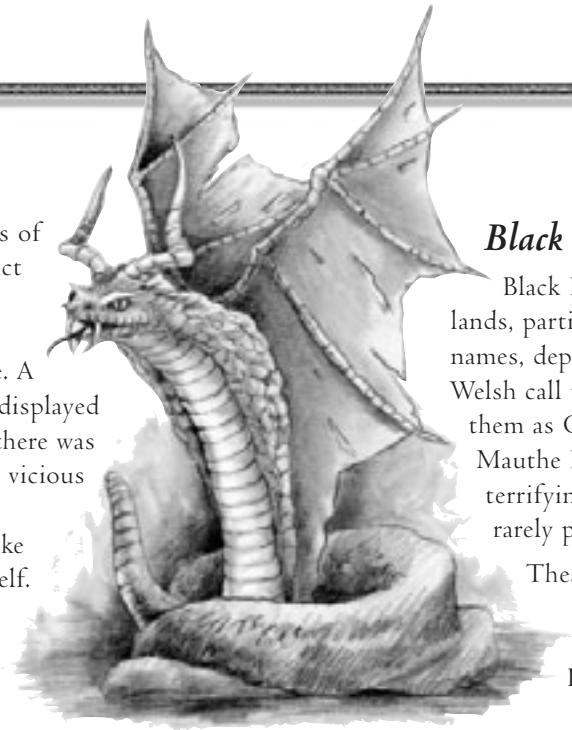
Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always Neutral

Advancement: 7-12 HD (Large), 13-18 HD (Huge)

Constriction (Ex): By succeeding at a Grapple check against a target creature of Large Size or smaller, the Amphipthere can get its coils around the foe. It then begins squeezing for 1d8+5 points of Crushing Damage. Additionally, the creature must make a Fortitude Save at DC 15 or suffer 1d6 points of Subdual Damage from asphyxiation. This Saving Throw must be made every round. After three failures, the target passes out and is subject to the rules for Suffocation. Escape is only possible by cutting one's way out of the coils or by killing the Amphipthere. A rescuer must inflict 20 points of damage to free a trapped comrade. The Amphipthere can attack normally with its Bite or Gore attack against a second creature while crushing the first in its coils.



in their coats of arms to inflict fear in their enemies and the populace. A person who displayed the Amphipthere was known to be vicious and without mercy just like the beast itself.

Black Dog

Black Dogs are found all over the Celtic lands, particularly in Albion. They have many names, depending on where they are found. The Welsh call them Cwn Annwn. The Scots know them as Ce Sith. The Manx refer to them as Mauthe Dhoog, but all agree that they are terrifying, large dogs, whose appearance rarely portends good.

These monstrous creatures are dogs the size of cattle. They have thick, shaggy black hair and glowing eyes. Black Dogs are found on lonely tracks,

crossroads, bridges, and other places that symbolize the transition of human lives. They are not always harmful, but they are deadly when engaged.

A Black Dog fights like a wolf, but it has the ability to paralyze its opponents when touching them, making it much easier to rend the unfortunates into tiny pieces. They can also become invisible, striking from unseen angles. Their bay holds no special power, but it is frightening to hear, and, according the Scots, a person who hears it three times before making it home is surely doomed. In certain counties in England, it is believed that the very appearance of a Black Dog heralds death.

However, Black Dogs are sometimes assigned to guard great treasures. While only a fool would attempt to fight them for these troves, it is said that, if they can be defeated, some of the greatest magic and wealth ever known can be uncovered. Any treasure a Black Dog is assigned to guard is hidden in its lair.

The legend of the Black Dog is prevalent throughout the British Isles. In fact, it was this myth that inspired Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's, *The Hound of the Baskervilles.*

Black Dog

Size: Medium Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 4d10+8 (30 Hit Points)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 50 feet
AC: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 Natural)
Attacks: Bite +6 melee (1d6+3), 2 Claws +1 melee (1d4+3)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Paralyzing Touch, Scent, Trip
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Invisibility 3/Day, Low-Light Vision
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 18
Skills: Intimidate +6, Jump +6, Listen +7
Feats: Alertness
Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Pack, (5-20)
Challenge Rating: 3
Treasure: 50% Coins, 30% Goods, Double Items
Alignment: Usually Neutral
Advancement: 5-9 HD (Medium), 10-12 HD (Large)

Paralyzing Touch (Sp): Those hit by a Black Dog's Claw Attack must make a Fortitude Save at DC 14. Those who fail are Paralyzed for 1d6+2 rounds.

Trip (Ex): If a Black Dog hits with its Bite Attack, it may attempt a Trip on its opponent without making a Touch Attack and without provoking an Attack of Opportunity. If the Trip attempt fails, the target creature cannot attempt to Trip the Black Dog.

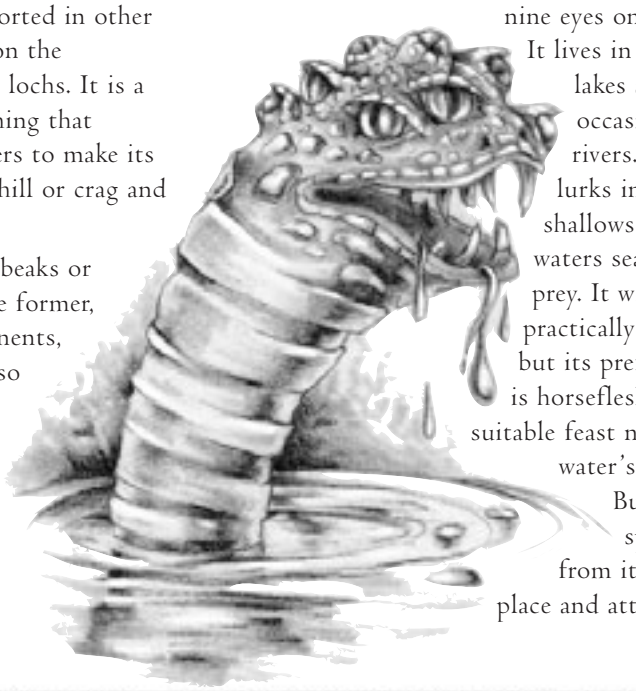
Boobrie

The Boobrie is giant bird found primarily in Scotland, though it has been reported in other areas as well. It makes its home on the shoreline, particularly among the lochs. It is a predator and attacks nearly anything that ventures along the shore. It prefers to make its home high above the water on a hill or crag and then swoops down upon its prey.

Boobries attack with their sharp beaks or with their talons. They prefer the former, pecking and biting at their opponents, while flapping their giant wings so as to appear more fearsome. Often, they swoop down upon unsuspecting creatures, snatching them up with their sharp talons and carrying them off to be devoured.

Burach Bhadi

This disgusting creature is a giant worm with nine eyes on its head. It lives in freshwater lakes and occasionally rivers. The beast lurks in the shallows of the waters searching for prey. It will eat practically anything, but its preferred food is horseflesh. When a suitable feast nears the water's edge, the Burach Bhadi springs from its hiding place and attempts to



Boobrie

Size: Huge Beast
Hit Dice: 7d10 (35 Hit Points)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 10 feet, Fly 70 feet (Average)
AC: 13 (-2 Size, +2 Dex, +3 Natural)
Attacks: Bite +6 melee (2d6+3) or Talons +6 melee (2d4+3)
Face/Range: 10 feet by 20 feet / 10 feet
Special Attacks: Snatch
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +1
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 8, Cha 10
Skills: Listen +11, Spot +11
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Shoreline
Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Family, (3-5)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 8-12 HD (Huge)

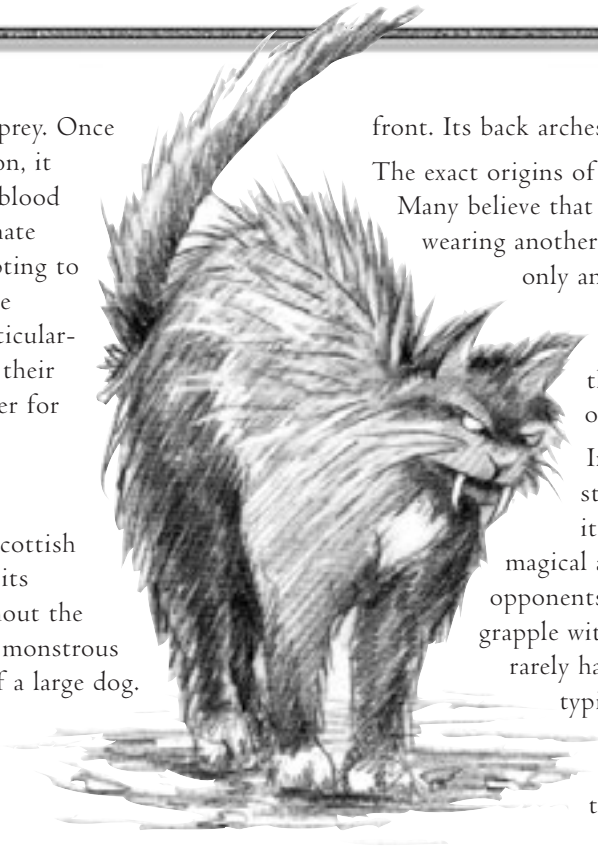
Snatch (Ex): A Boobrie may attempt to make a Grapple check against a creature of Large Size or smaller. It must be in flight when it does so. If successful, the Boobrie grabs hold of the target, snatching it off the ground and rising up into the sky. A prey that struggles overly much is typically dropped either into the water or onto the ground to kill it so that it may more conveniently be taken back to the nest and devoured.

Burach Bhadi

Size: Large Beast
Hit Dice: 9d10 (49 Hit Points)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 20 feet, Swim 40 feet
AC: 10 (-1 Size, +1 Dex)
Attacks: Bite +9/+4 melee (1d8+4)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Blood Drain
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +4
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 14
Skills: Listen +10
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any Freshwater
Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Nest (5-10)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 10-14 HD (Huge)

Blood Drain (Ex): A Burach Bhadi that succeeds on a Bite Attack may attempt a Grapple as a Free Action. If it is successful, it locks its jaws on the target and inflicts 1d4 points of Constitution Damage every round that it can maintain the hold. Creatures so Grappled must also make an opposed Strength check against the monster to avoid being dragged into the water. On the first failure, the target is pulled to the water's edge. On the second it is dragged into the water. On the third it is pulled under and must start defending itself against Drowning.

attach itself to the prey. Once its jaws are locked on, it begins sucking the blood out of the unfortunate creature and attempting to drag it back into the water. Celts are particularly wary of bringing their horses near the water for this very reason.



Cat Sith

The Cat Sith is a Scottish monster, but it has its equivalents throughout the Celtic lands. It is a monstrous black cat the size of a large dog. It is covered in shaggy fur-like bristles and has a white mark on its front. Its back arches threateningly.

The exact origins of this creature are uncertain. Many believe that they are actually witches wearing another form. Others suggest it is only an horrific animal with magical powers. Regardless, Cat Sith are always evil, and their appearance is a portent of doom.

In combat, the beast can strike as an ordinary cat, but it much prefers to use it magical abilities first, weakening its opponents before attempting to grapple with them. Cat Sith very rarely have treasure. Those that do typically have a Magic Item stashed away in their lairs – more proof that they really are witches.

Cat Sith

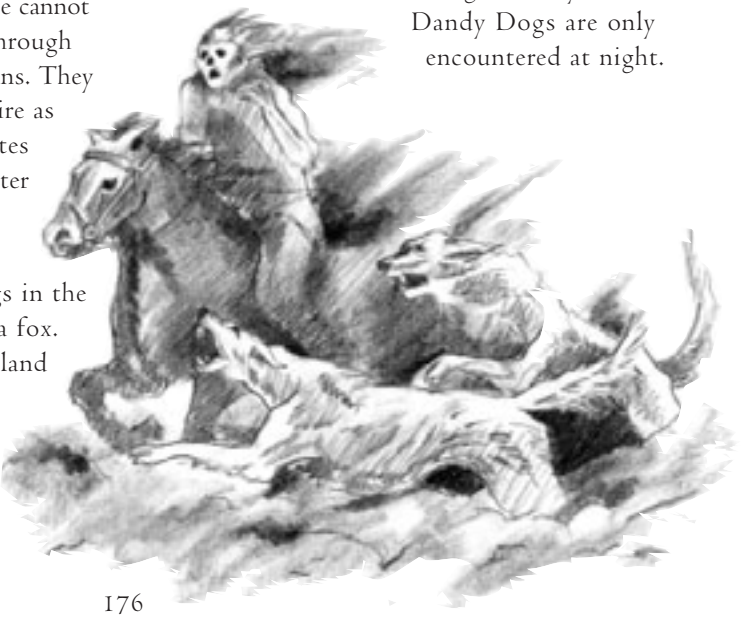
Size: Medium Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (19 Hit Points)
Initiative: +4 (Dex)
Speed: 50 feet
AC: 19 (+4 Dex, +5 Natural)
Attacks: 2 Claws +6 melee (1d4+2), Bite -1 melee (1d6+2)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Spell-like Abilities
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +3
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 13
Skills: Jump +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spot +9
Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting
Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Pride (5-20)
Challenge **Rating:** 3
Treasure: 15% Items
Alignment: Always Chaotic Evil
Advancement: 4-9 HD (Medium), 10-12 HD (Large)

Spell-like Abilities: Cat Sith can cast the following spells three times per day: Bane, Cause Fear, and Obscuring Mist. Twice per day, they can cast Doom and Darkness. Once per day, they may cast Bestow Curse. All spells are cast as though by a 5th Level Caster.

Devil's Dandy Dogs

These monsters are far worse than the usual Black Dogs encountered. They are always encountered in a pack driven by a Huntsman, who seeks to murder human beings and claim their souls. The Huntsman rides a gargantuan black steed, has fiery red eyes, and is completely incorporeal. He cannot be attacked or harmed. He acts solely through his pack. The dogs are bigger than humans. They have fire in their eyes and can breathe fire as well. They delight in ripping unfortunates to shreds. These monsters and their master are frequently held to be Arawn riding through the land in pursuit of souls.

Devil's Dandy Dogs hunt human beings in the same way that a pack of beagles hunts a fox. They chase the hapless soul across the land until they can corner it and tear it to pieces. They are absolutely relentless and can only truly be stopped in three ways: the arrival of dawn, the crow of a cock, or the prayers of the hunted. Any of these three things causes them to vanish. While they can be slain in combat, they simply return an hour or so later to hunt the quarry again. Those that survive the attack of these fiends record it as the single most harrowing night of their lives. Owing to their weakness in the light of day, Devil's Dandy Dogs are only encountered at night.



Eaĕh Uisge

Celts seem to have an unnatural fear of the water, and this creature personifies it strongly. Eaĕh Uisge is the Gaelic name for this monster, but all of the Celtic peoples have some form of this particular myth.

There are two varieties of this fiend: the Eaĕh Uisge, which patrols the shoreline of lakes and rivers, and the Kelpie, an ocean variety. Both take the form of magnificent horses that prance along the water's edge. They attempt to entice human beings to ride them, promising them swift passage, eternal servitude, or anything else they can imagine the person wanting from them.

Once the rider mounts, though, the creature dashes into the water so that it can drown and devour the poor soul. Worse, the victim finds that he or she is magically bound to the creature's back and unable to dismount. Eaĕh Uisge do not like to fight, but they will if threatened. Most usually, they simply seek to find a meal. Since few humans can follow them far into the water, retreat is fairly simple.

Devil's Dandy Dogs

Size: Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 6d10+18 (51 Hit Points)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 50 feet

AC: 15 (-1 Size, +2 Dex, +3 Natural)

Attacks: Bite +7 melee (1d8+4), 2 Claws +2 melee (1d6+4)

Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Breath Weapon, Scent, Trip

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +2

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 18

Skills: Intimidate +8, Jump +6, Listen +9, Spot +2

Feats: Alertness

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Pack (5-20)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Always Chaotic Evil

Advancement: 7-12 HD (Large), 13-18 HD (Huge)

Breath Weapon (Su): Devil's Dandy Dogs can breathe a 15-foot cone of fire every 1d4 rounds that deals 4d6 points of damage. A Reflex Save halves the damage.

Trip (Ex): If one of Devil's Dandy Dogs hits with its Bite Attack, it may attempt a Trip on its opponent without making a Touch Attack and without provoking an Attack of Opportunity. If the Trip attempt fails, the target creature cannot attempt to Trip the beast.

Skills: Devil's Dandy Dogs have a +4 Racial Bonus to Listen checks.

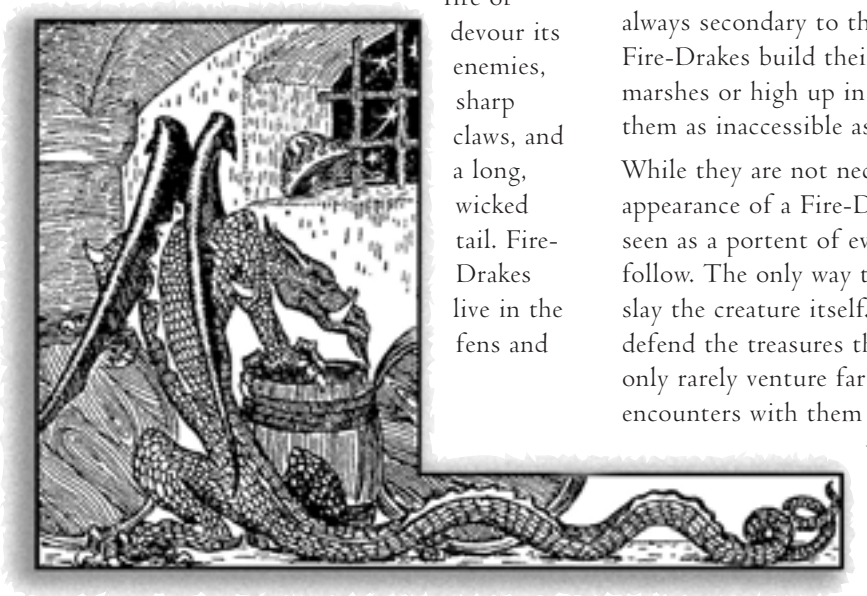
Eaěh Uisge

Size: Large Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 4d10+6 (28 Hit Points)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 60 feet
AC: 13 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +3 Natural)
Attacks: 2 Hooves +2 melee (1d4+1) or Bite +2 melee (1d4+1)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Binding
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 13
Skills: Listen +8, Spot +9
Feats: None.
Climate/Terrain: Any Shoreline
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Usually Neutral Evil
Advancement: 5-10 HD (Large)

Binding (Su): Any person that mounts an Eaěh Usige must make a Reflex Save at DC 14 or find himself or herself bound to the back of the creature unable to escape. The Eaěh Usige gallops into the water when this happens and drowns the rider before eating him or her.

Fire-Drake

The Fire-Drake is the classic Celtic dragon, and it clearly set the tone for the modern perception of the occidental dragon. It is an enormous reptile with large wings that allow it to fly, a huge maw from which it can breathe fire or devour its enemies, sharp claws, and a long, wicked tail. Fire-Drakes live in the fens and marshlands, though they are occasionally encountered in the mountains as well.



Unlike its fantasy cousin, the Fire-Drake does not hoard wealth for the purpose of having it. Rather, it is the guardian of some specific treasure, usually one of great power. It may have more standard treasure in its hoard, but this is always secondary to the item that it guards. Fire-Drakes build their lairs beneath the marshes or high up in the mountains to make them as inaccessible as possible.

While they are not necessarily evil, the appearance of a Fire-Drake is terrifying. It is seen as a portent of evil and bad times to follow. The only way to defeat this curse is to slay the creature itself. For this reason and to defend the treasures they guard, Fire-Drakes only rarely venture far outside their lairs. Most encounters with them occur when some fool wishes to make a name for himself and sets off to slay one. It usually ends badly for the would-be hero.

In combat, the Fire-Drake strikes first with its huge, toothy maw, and then follows up with its claws and tail. It's quite capable of fighting more than one foe at a time. Its most legendary and preferred method of attack, though, is to spew forth a huge gout of flame, thereby ending the battle quickly.

Fomorian

The Fomorians were the original inhabitants of Ireland. They were defeated by the Firbolgs, who were in turn conquered by the Tuatha dé Danann. The Firbolgs cursed the Fomorians, mutating them into hideous creatures. Where once they were human, they now have the heads

Fire-Drake

Size: Huge Dragon

Hit Dice: 8d12+40 (92 Hit Points)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Speed: 20 feet, Fly 60 feet (Poor)

AC: 21 (-2 Size, +4 Dex, +9 Natural)

Attacks: Bite +13 melee (2d8+6), 2 Claws +11 melee (2d6+6), Tail +9 melee (1d8+6)

Face/Range: 10 feet by 20 feet / 10 feet

Special Attacks: Breath Weapon, Frightful Presence, Improved Grab, Swallow Whole

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Immune to Fire, Sleep and Paralysis, Low-Light Vision 60 feet

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +8

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 19, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 19

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Climb +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +8, Search +8, Swim +8

Feats: Flyby Attack, Multiattack, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any Swamp or Mountain

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: 30% Coins, 40% Goods, Double Items

Alignment: Usually Neutral

Advancement: 9-12 HD (Huge), 13-20 HD (Gargantuan), 21-24 HD (Colossal)

Breath Weapon (Ex): A Fire-Drake can breathe a cone of flames extending 15 feet. This fire deals 6d6 points of damage. A Reflex Save at DC 17 halves the damage. The Fire-Drake can only breathe once every 1d4 rounds.

Frightful Presence (Ex): All creatures within 30 feet of a Fire-Drake must make a Will Saving Throw at DC 18 or suffer from the effects of Fear.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a Fire-Drake hits with its Bite Attack it may attempt to make a Grapple check without provoking an Attack of Opportunity as a Free Action. If it succeeds it may attempt to swallow the victim whole.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A Fire-Drake with a creature in its maw may attempt to swallow it by making another Grapple check. If this one succeeds, it gets the target down its throat. Swallowed creatures take 2d8 points of Crushing Damage and 2d4 points of Acid Damage every round. A swallowed creature may try to cut its way out with a natural weapon or handheld weapon that does Slashing Damage. The creature must deal the Drake 20 points of damage to cut its way free. A Fire-Drake cannot Swallow Whole a creature the same size or larger than it.

Fomorian

Size: Medium Monstrous Humanoid
Hit Dice: 3d8+6 (19 Hit Points)
Initiative: -1 (Dex)
Speed: 15 feet
AC: 12 (-1 Dex, +3 Natural)
Attacks: Longsword +5 melee (1d8+3)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None.
Special Qualities: None.
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13
Skills: Listen +8, Spot +5
Feats: Alertness
Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, Pair, Patrol (3-10), or Tribe (20-50)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually Chaotic Evil
Advancement: By Character Class

Fuath

Size: Medium Humanoid
Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 Hit Points)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 feet
AC: 12 (+2 Natural)
Attacks: Tail +4 melee (1d4+2), Shortspear -2 melee (1d8+2) or +1 ranged (1d8+2)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Water-breathing
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11
Skills: Swim +7
Feats: Weapon Focus (Tail)
Climate/Terrain: Any Water
Organization: Solitary, Pair, Patrol (3-10), or Tribe (20-50)
Challenge Rating: 1/2
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually Chaotic Evil
Advancement: By Character Class

Water-breathing (Ex): Fuaths breathe as naturally underwater as they do on land. They can only remain out of the water for eight hours before they must return, however.

of goats and only one eye, one leg, and one arm. Many of them also suffer from horrible lesions and suppurating sores.

Despite these shortcomings, they still manage to wreak havoc. Fomorian tribes hate humans and plague them with evil. Often, they demand cattle as tribute from human settlements. These tributes generally amount to two thirds of the herd. Anyone who resists has his or her nose cut off. If the quota is not met, the Fomorians

attack the settlement, carrying off humans to fill the difference. Given the status that a large herd of cattle gains a Celtic chieftain, this can be a serious problem.

Fomorians are fierce warriors made brave by their fury at their fate. They fight with a savagery to match the Celts despite their unipedal limitations. They are much tougher than they appear to be, and many a Celt has found himself dead at the hand of a Fomorian because he underestimated the fiend's battle prowess.

Fuath

The Fuaths are a monstrous race of humanoids that makes their home on the shores of lochs, the sea, and rivers. They generally isolate themselves and are rarely seen, which is good because they hate human beings and seek to destroy them. A tribe of Fuaths will do all it can to eradicate any human settlement near it.

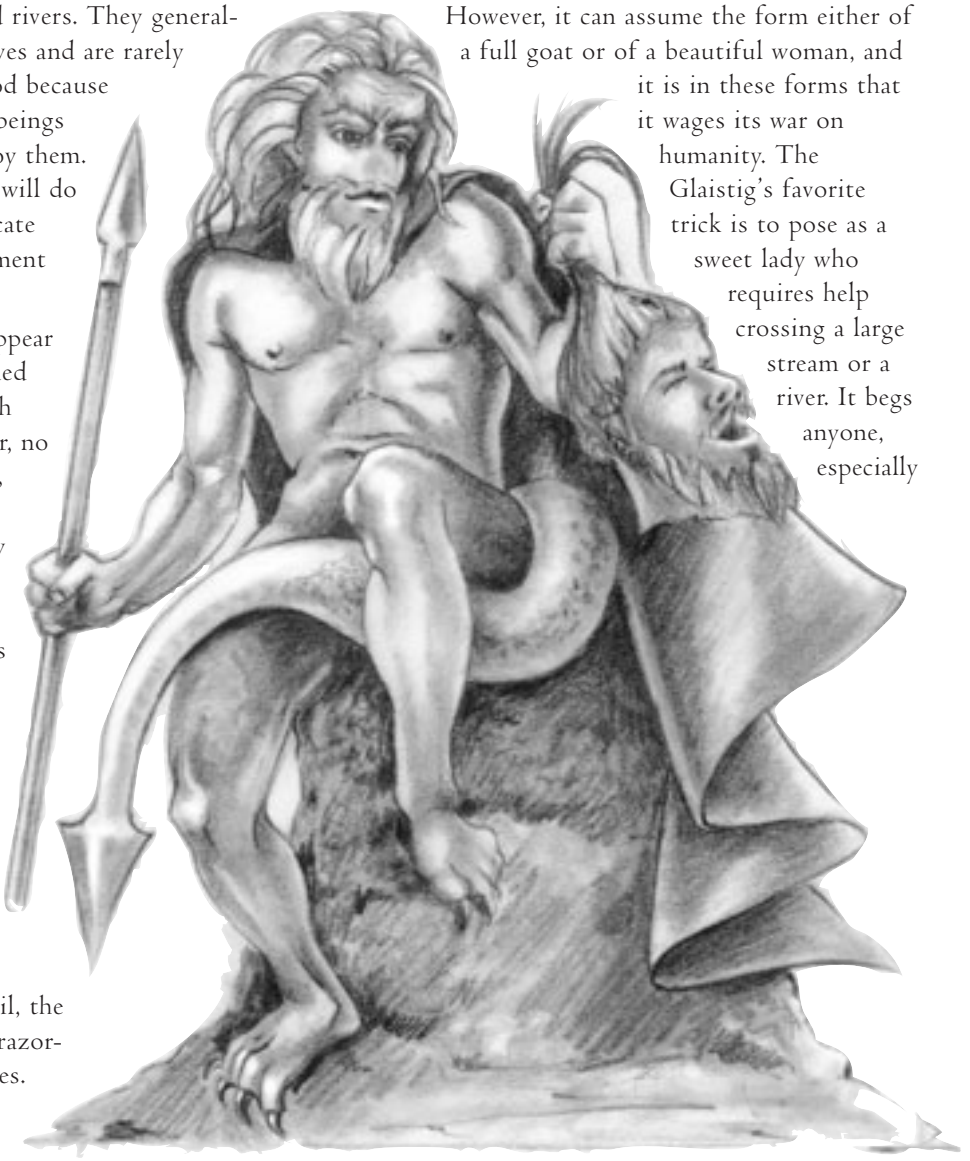
These creatures appear as slightly deformed human beings with shaggy, yellow hair, no nose, webbed feet, and a long, spiky tail. They generally wear green robes slit up the back to allow their tails to protrude.

Fuaths arm themselves with shortspears, which they use in combat, but they are poor spear-fighters at best. Their true weapon is their tail, the spike of which is razor-sharp on both sides. They can slice or stab with this weapon and are quite practiced at doing both. The shortspear is intended as a follow-up weapon. Fuaths are not inherently clever, but they do understand basic tactics, and will employ them on any foe they fight as a group. Amphibious in nature, they retreat back to the water when overmatched.

Glaistig

This evil creature is a bane to all those who meet it. The Glaistig hates all humans and seeks to undo them. It is a shape-shifter whose true form is that of a monstrous woman from the waist up with the body of a goat from the waist down. It has goat horns on its head and the strange wide pupils of a goat as well.

However, it can assume the form either of a full goat or of a beautiful woman, and it is in these forms that it wages its war on humanity. The Glaistig's favorite trick is to pose as a sweet lady who requires help crossing a large stream or a river. It begs anyone, especially



men, to carry it across, using whatever story it can think of to make itself seem more pitiable. Once across, it transforms into its true self and tears its benefactor to pieces so that it can drink the blood. It will also disguise itself as a goat and join a herd so as to attack the goatherd or the family that keeps the farm.

In combat, a Glaistig attacks with sharp claws on the ends of its fingers, the horns on its head, and its terrible sharp teeth. These last it attempts to sink into the flesh of its targets so as to suck the blood from them.

Loathly Worm

The Loathly Worm is another type of dragon. It has no wings and only two legs, both on the front of its body. Like its cousin, the Fire-Drake, though, it is has a large, toothy maw with which it consumes its prey. The worm more resembles a serpent than a dragon, and its two fangs are capable of spitting poison at its opponents. While they are not generally evil, Loathly Worms have nasty tempers that are easily provoked. A worm on a rampage can wreak havoc across the countryside in little time.

In combat, the beast usually spits its poison to blind and disorient its foes. Then it moves in, striking with its bite, claws, and tail. It attempts to swallow opponents whole as quickly as possible, especially when it must fight more than one creature.

Glaistig

Size: Medium Shapechanger

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 Hit Points)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Natural)

Attacks: 2 Claws +3 melee (1d4), Bite +1 melee (1d6), Gore +1 melee (1d4)

Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Blood Drain, Improved Grab

Special Qualities: Shapechange

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +5

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +7, Innuendo +6, Listen +8, Spot +8

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Climate/Terrain: Any, especially near fresh water

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: 30% Coins, 20% Goods

Alignment: Always Chaotic Evil

Advancement: By Character Class

Blood Drain (Ex): A Glaistig that has a hold on a target may attempt to make a second Grapple check. If successful, it latches on with its fangs and inflicts 1d4 points of Constitution Damage every round that it can maintain the hold.

Improved Grab (Ex): When the Glaistig hits with a Claw Attack, it may attempt a Grapple check as a Free Action without provoking an Attack of Opportunity. If successful, the Glaistig has a hold of the creature and may attempt to Blood Drain.

Shapechange (Su): Glaistigs may transform themselves into their true form or either of their disguises as a Standard Action at will. Transformation takes one round.

Loathly Worm

Size: Huge Dragon

Hit Dice: 7d12+28 (73 Hit Points)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Speed: 20 feet

AC: 21 (-2 Size, +4 Dex, +9 Natural)

Attacks: Bite +10 melee (2d8+6), 2 Claws +8 melee (2d6+6), Tail +8 melee (1d8+6)

Face/Range: 15 feet by 15 feet (Coiled) / 10 feet

Special Attacks: Breath Weapon, Improved Grab, Swallow Whole

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Immune to Sleep and Paralysis, Low-Light Vision 60 feet

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +5

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 19, Con 18, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 17

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +7, Intimidate +7, Search +7, Swim +7

Feats: Multiattack, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any Swamp or Forest

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Usually Neutral

Advancement: 8-12 HD (Huge), 13-18 HD (Gargantuan), 19-21 HD (Colossal)

Breath Weapon (Ex): A Loathly Worm spits poison at its enemies in a line 15 feet in length. Those hit by the venom suffer 1d6 points of Dexterity Damage and 1d6 points of Constitution Damage two rounds later. A creature may make a Reflex Save at DC 15 to cut this damage in half. Targets must also make a Reflex Save at DC 15 to avoid being Blinded by the venom. Those that fail suffer for 1d6 rounds. A Loathly Worm may only spit its poison every 1d4 rounds.

Improved Grab (Ex): If the worm hits with its Bite Attack, it may attempt a Grapple check as a Free Action without provoking an Attack of Opportunity. If this check is successful, it may attempt to swallow the victim whole.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A Loathly Worm that has a hold with its mouth on a target creature may attempt to swallow it. If the worm succeeds on a second Grapple attempt, it manages to get the hapless thing down its gullet. Within the worm's stomach, the target takes 2d8 points of Crushing Damage, and 2d4 points of Acid Damage per round. A creature can attempt to cut its way out. 20 points of damage must be inflicted on the Loathly Worm's stomach to get free. A Loathly Worm cannot Swallow Whole a creature that is the same size or larger as it.

Merrow

The Merrow are the merfolk of Irish folklore. They are human from the waist up and have the lower body of a fish. The females are extremely beautiful with pale skin, dark eyes, and long hair. The men are hideous. They have green skin, teeth, and hair, and they have a long, sharp, red nose and tiny, narrow eyes. Both sexes have webbed fingers.

The Merrow can shape-shift into the form of any land animal or a human being so that they can go about on land undetected. This is accomplished by means of a magical red-feathered cap. If the cap is lost or stolen, the Merrow

Merrow

Size: Medium Humanoid
Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 Hit Points)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 5 feet, Swim 30 feet
AC: 11 (+1 Dex)
Attacks: Shortspear +0 melee (1d8) or +1 ranged (1d8)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Magic Cap, Water-breathing
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +0
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14
Skills: Swim +6
Feats: Lightning Reflexes
Climate/Terrain: Any Water
Organization: Solitary, Pair, Group (3-8), or Tribe (20-50)
Challenge Rating: 1/2
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Any
Advancement: By Character Class

Magic Cap (Sp): This hat can transform a Merrow into a normal human or any land animal of Medium or Small size. Its power is usable three times a day, but the magic will only work on a Merrow.

Water-breathing (Ex): Merrow can breathe underwater the same as they can on land.

cannot return to his or her underwater demesne. Those in the know are always on the lookout for a beautiful woman in a red-feathered cap. If the cap can be stolen and it is a mermaid in disguise, the man has a chance of marrying her.

The Merrow are generally peace-loving and bear humanity no ill will. They do intermarry with humans, and the children of such unions typically have webbed feet and display a longing for the sea.

Monoceros

The Monoceros is a strange beast that is not very friendly to humans. It has the body of a horse, the legs and feet of an elephant, the tail of a boar, and the head of a deer, except that, rather than antlers, it has one enormous black horn in the middle of its head. It is sometimes confused with a unicorn and hunted for its horn, which is believed to have the same properties. Doing so is very dangerous, however.

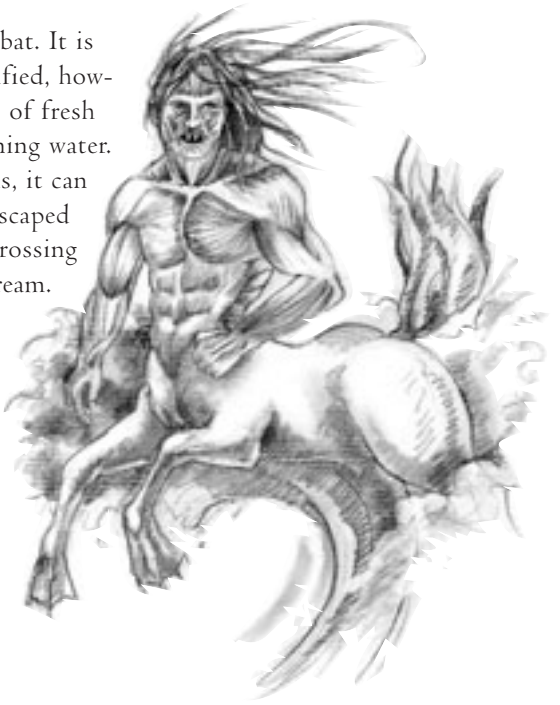
These creatures hate human beings and

attack them whenever they encroach upon their territories. The Monoceros has a terrifying bray that makes all who hear it have their blood run cold. It attacks by charging and goring its targets with its horn. It can also trample them under its large feet. Some legends suggest that the Monoceros can be killed, but never taken alive. Most people are not foolish enough to find out.

Nuckalevee

This strange creature plagues the coastlines of all Celtic Europe. It is similar to a centaur in that it has the torso and head of a man and the legs of a horse, but it has no skin. It lives in the ocean, but comes out frequently to pester humanity. It has putrid, poisonous breath that carries pestilence.

The Nuckalevee is extremely aggressive, hunting any who enter its domain. In combat it relies on a combination of its Breath Weapon and melee combat. It is terrified, however, of fresh running water. Thus, it can be escaped by crossing a stream.



Monoceros

Size: Large Beast

Hit Dice: 4d10+8 (30 Hit Points)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 16 (-1 Size, +2 Dex, +5 Natural)

Attacks: Gore +6 melee (1d8+5)

Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Fearsome Bray, Trample

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 14

Skills: Listen +7

Feats: None

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and Warm Forests

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Family, (3-5), or Herd (6-15)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always Neutral

Advancement: 5-8 HD (Large), 9-12 HD (Huge)

Fearsome Bray (Ex): Any creature within 30 feet of the Monoceros when it brays that can hear it must make a Will Save at DC 14 or suffer from the effects of Fear. A creature that saves cannot be affected by the bray again that day.

Trample (Ex): A Monceros that hits with its Gore Attack may attempt a Trip as a Free Action. If it is successful and the target is knocked to the ground, the Monoceros tramples it, inflicting an additional 2d6+5 points of damage. Target creatures are considered Prone until they get up. They may attempt Attacks of Opportunity against subsequent Trample Attacks while Prone, but do so at a -4 penalty.

Pooka

The Pooka is a cousin of the Eaĕh Uisge and is native to Ireland. Like others of its kind, it appears as a beautiful horse that trods the shoreline of lakes, streams, and even the ocean attempting to lure unsuspecting human beings to mount it. If they do so, it gallops off into the water to drown and devour the unfortunate. A rider finds himself or herself bound to the Pooka's back unable to dismount. Pookas especially favor children as victims, though they will eat adults.

Despite all this, Pookas are attributed with one feature their cousins are not. On the Feast of Samhain, they will appear to trample blackberries into wine, and they will offer prophetic visions to those who ask.

Roman Legionnaire

The legionnaire is the foot soldier of Rome, found throughout the world. His pilum and his gladius enforce Rome's will and are the tools by which whole peoples are conquered. While a single legionnaire is no match for a Celt in the open field, Roman battle tactics are designed to tip the scales in the Romans' favor. Formation fighting and tight quarters strip the Celts of their natural advantages and allow the Romans to slaughter them by the thousands.

Roman Legions adopt the same tactics regardless of the battle. They hurl their pila at charging foes to cut down their numbers and rob them of their shields. Then they close in and stab at the attackers with their

Nuckalevee

Size: Large Monstrous Humanoid
Hit Dice: 4d8+8 (26 Hit Points)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 50 feet
AC: 13 (-1 Size, +2 Dex, +2 Natural)
Attacks: Club +6 melee (1d6+4)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Breath Weapon
Special Qualities: Immune to Disease
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills: Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Swim +8
Feats: Endurance
Climate/Terrain: Any Ocean
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Chaotic Evil
Advancement: 5-8 HD (Large) 9-12 HD (Huge)

Breath Weapon (Ex): Once every 1d4 rounds the Nuckalevee can breathe a cloud of stinking gas. This gas extends in a cone 10 feet from its mouth. The putrid fumes inflict 2d6 points of damage on any creature caught within them. Additionally, the target must make a Fortitude Save at DC 12 to avoid being Nauseated.

The more sinister aspect of the gas, though, is its ability to convey disease. Any character within the cloud must make a Fortitude Save at DC 12 to avoid contracting the plague. Those that fail have an incubation time of 1d3 days, after which they suffer 1d4 points of Constitution Damage. The character has a high fever and is effectively Fatigued until the disease is cured. Each day, the character takes another 1d4 points of Constitution Damage. Worse, those who come in contact with him or her must also make a Fortitude Save at DC 12 or become infected themselves.

Pooka

Size: Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 3d10+6 (22 Hit Points)

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 60 feet

AC: 13 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +3 Natural)

Attacks: 2 Hooves +2 melee (1d4+1) or Bite +2 melee (1d4+1)

Face/Range: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: Binding

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet, Vision

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +4

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13

Skills: Knowledge (Nature) +7, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Sense Motive +7, Swim +7

Feats: Improved Initiative, Run

Climate/Terrain: Any Shoreline

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 2

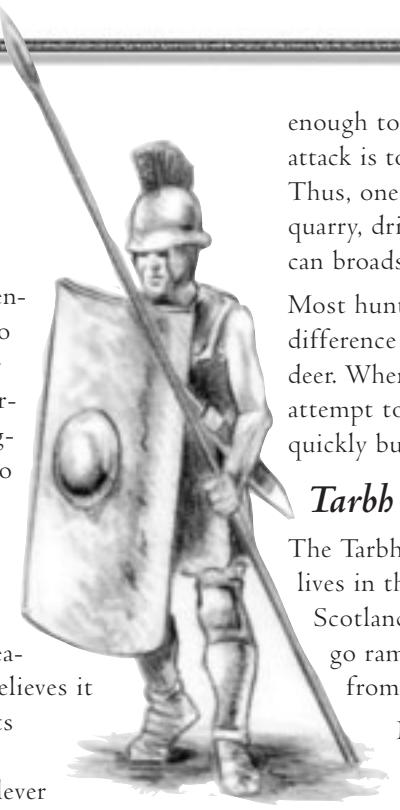
Treasure: None.

Alignment: Usually Neutral

Advancement: 4-9 HD (Large)

Binding (Su): Any person that mounts a Pooka must make a Reflex Save at DC 12 or find himself or herself bound to the back of the creature, unable to escape. The Pooka rides into the water when this happens and drowns the rider before eating him or her.

Vision (Sp): On the Feast of Samhain (and on no other day), a Pooka may cast the Divine Spell Vision without the Experience cost to give advice to a human. Each person present is limited to one question.



short swords while hiding behind their large shields for protection.

Sianach

This sinister creature is identical to a deer in all but two ways. First it is a predatory carnivore rather than an herbivore. Second, it has a larger mouth and sharp teeth to accommodate its meat-eating habits.

The Sianach is an aggressive predator, and it will happily attack most any creature it encounters that it believes it can take. It is gifted with its gentler cousin's speed and maneuverability, and it is clever enough to hunt in teams. The beast's primary attack is to use its antlers to gore its opponents. Thus, one or two Sianachs will chase their quarry, driving them so that another of them can broadside a target with its horns.

Most hunters have learned to recognize the difference between the Sianach and the standard deer. When the former is encountered, they attempt to leave it alone and escape the area quickly but quietly.

Tarbh Uisge

The Tarbh Uisge is an enormous black bull that lives in the waters, particularly the lakes of Scotland and Ireland. It emerges at night to go rampaging across the land, breathing fire from its nostrils.

Most troublesome is its practice of mating with any cows it finds. The

Roman Legionnaire

Size: Medium

Hit Dice: 1d10 + 1 (6 Hit Points)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 20 feet

AC: 21 (+2 Dex, +5 Breastplate, +1 Shield, +3 Formation Fighting)

Attacks: Gladius +2 melee (1d6) or Pilum +4 ranged (1d6)

Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: None.

Special Qualities: None.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +4

Feats: Formation Fighting, Roman Spear Proficiency

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Squad (5-10)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always Lawful

Advancement: 2-4 HD (Medium; Centurion), 5-8 HD (Medium; Captain), 9-12 HD (Medium; General)

For every 100 legionnaires, there will be one Centurion of 5-8 hit dice. For every 1000, a 9-12 HD Legate is present.

Sianach

Size: Large Beast

Hit Dice: 4d10+8 (30 Hit Points)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 60 feet

AC: 14 (-1 Size, +3 Dex, +2 Natural)

Attacks: Gore +4 melee (1d8+3)

Face/Range: 5 feet by 5 feet / 5 feet

Special Attacks: None.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +4

Feats: None

Climate/Terrain: Any Forest

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Family (3-5), or Herd (6-20)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always Neutral

Advancement: 5-10 HD (Large), 11-12 HD (Huge)

Skills: The Sianach gains a +4 Racial Bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

progeny of such couplings are known as Corc-chluasask. They are larger than normal calves, and have a velvety pelt instead of a hide. They are easily recognized by their split ears. Corc-chluasask bring curses with them. They can taint an entire herd, cause poor harvests, and other calamities. For this reason, any calf born with split ears or even only half an ear is butchered immediately.

In combat, the Tarbh Uisge prefers to run down its opponents, goring them with its massive horns. It will breathe fire upon its foes, but this is not as potent a weapon as its charge.

Tarbh Uisge

Size: Large Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 8d10+24 (68 Hit Points)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 50 feet
AC: 12 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +2 Natural)
Attacks: Gore +8/+3 melee (1d8+3)
Face/Range: 5 feet by 10 feet / 5 feet
Special Attacks: Breath Weapon
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Low-Light Vision 60 feet
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +2
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11
Skills: Listen +7, Spot +12
Feats: Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack
Climate/Terrain: Any Water
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: None.
Alignment: Always Neutral
Advancement: 9-12 HD (Large), 13-16 HD (Huge)

Breath Weapon (Ex): Every 1d4 rounds, a Tarbh Uisge may breathe fire in a 5-foot line, inflicting 6d4 points of damage. A Reflex Save halves the damage.

Author Bios

John R. Phythyon, Jr. is an Origins Award-winning game designer. He's been publishing since 1996 and has contributed to such lines as Hong Kong Action Theatre!, Heaven & Earth, Legend of the Five Rings, Deadlands, Big Eyes Small Mouth, and various titles for Avalanche Press's d20 line. Of these, he's proudest of his work on Black Flags: Piracy in the Caribbean, Doom of Odin, and Vlad, the Impaler: Blood Prince of Wallachia. He also chairs the Academy of Adventure Game Arts and Design, sits on GAMA's Board of Directors, and writes a monthly column, "Playing to Win," for Comics & Games Retailer magazine. He lives in Lawrence, Kansas with his wife, Jennifer, and his dog, Brittany.

Ree Soesbee lives in Los Angeles, a stopping point somewhere between birth and death that looks a lot like the Apocalypse and smells like ash. She is lucky enough to be the keeper of the Queen of All Cats — an honor she pays for by changing the Royal Litterbox and dragging the Royal String. Ree has been working on game literature for the last six years and cut her teeth on D&D when she was still in the crib. Other than that, she's short, red-haired, and usually has paint on her fingers. Nothing much else seems to matter.

Mike Bennighof holds a PH.D. in military history from Emory University and is a Fulbright Scholar. He's won multiple Origins Awards and a number of writing awards, and has been a journalist, university professor, semi-pro football player and has shoveled gravel professionally. He's been publishing games since 1986 and is a founder of Avalanche Press. He lives in Birmingham, Alabama with his wife, Carole, his children, Alice, Anton and Henry, and his dogs, Ralf, Susie, Douglas and the world-renowned Chester Chihuahua.

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